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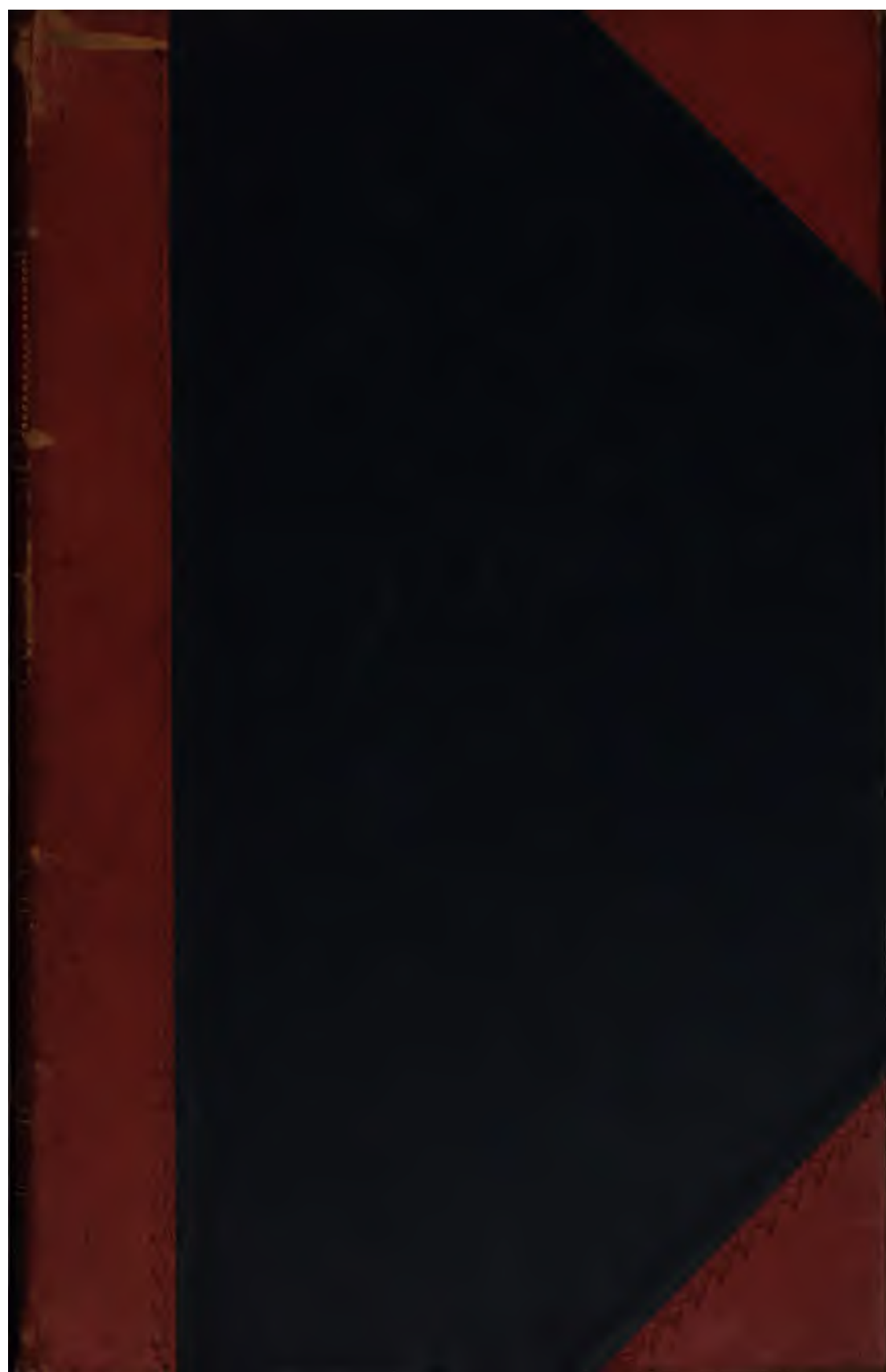
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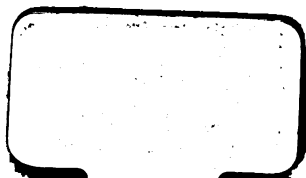
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NEW VIEW OF THE APOCALYPSE:

OR,

THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT AND OF EUROPE IDENTICAL.

WITH A NEW APOCALYPTIC CHART,
AND DIAGRAMS SHOWING THE REITERATED PERIODS OF PROPHECY.

BY

C. E. FRASER TYTLER,

H. E. I. C. CIVIL SERVICE.

PART I



"Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it."—
HAB. II. 2.

"Despise not prophesyings."—1 THESS. V. 20.

"The way to profit by reading Scripture, is to apply to ourselves that which is spoken
generally to all: this truth, this command, this threat, this promise, this intimation, is
to me."—BISHOP WILSON.

EDINBURGH:
JOHNSTONE AND HUNTER.
LONDON: ROBERT THEOBALD.

M.DCCC.LII.

107. c. 36.37

N.B.—Our work is twofold: The Sketch, and the several Introductions to each chapter, and App. A. and B., are intended for *consecutive perusal*; the Notes forming the body of each chapter are for *reference*. The former give the full outline of the subject; the latter supply all minute details. We solicit the reader's first attention to the former; its perusal may be accomplished in a few hours. Having thereby obtained a *full outline* of our scheme, he can, at will, refer to the notes for *detail*. Attention to this will, we trust, remove all intricacy from the subject. Disregard of it will greatly confuse.

For the sake of easy reference, we have numbered the paragraphs of our Sketch, of the Introduction of each chapter, and of the General Remarks made at the close of certain chapters. Hence—Ske. 6. signifies the sixth paragraph of the Sketch. Intro. i. 4, the fourth paragraph of the Introduction to chapter i. Gen. Rem. vi. 2, the second paragraph of the General Remarks on chapter vi.

PREFACE.

THE accompanying Sketch forms the introduction to a work which the author has prepared, and purposed to publish in two volumes.

But the public ear is at present wellnigh closed to prophecy, and this divine subject is one of the least popular¹ of the day. Many have written thereon, but no two writers agree, and no two readers

¹ We have letters from the most experienced publishers showing the utter unpopularity of the subject. "Scarcely one of the numerous works on Prophecy published in the last two years, has paid its own expenses—nearly all have been losing concerns." On the other hand, we read in the Bloomsbury Lectures, that "the *Weekly Despatch* and the *Northern Star*, two blasphemous and revolutionary newspapers, have attained the enormous circulation of 150,000 weekly. . These, however, are exceeded in atrocity by one hundred and sixty-three different unstamped newspapers." "In Paris, during the seven years ending 1824, upwards of two millions of volumes of the works of Voltaire and Rousseau were printed. In Germany, a work appeared some time ago by H. Haire, a writer of great reputation, which the *Quarterly Review* informs us has created an *extraordinary sensation* in France and Germany. Its doctrine is, that there is no divinity but man, and that all men are gods." The Apocalypse not only explains this and all kindred mysteries, but carries with it the best and truest antidote.

The *Edinburgh Review* for July 1850 states, "The total annual issue

can reconcile the disagreements—hence inquiry is lulled, and men, like the wise virgins, are indulging in that sleep which will only be broken by the voice, “Behold the bridegroom cometh;” for the Spirit speaketh expressly, that on this subject every wise man shall slumber.

Our first aim, then, obviously is to reawaken inquiry: hence our present partial publication.

The unpopularity of the subject is not, however, the only obstacle. The solution of the Apocalypse now offered is new, and mankind have, as shown,¹ ever been slow to admit any new truth.

There is a third, thus stated to us: “The most eminent theologians have already expressed their ideas on the subject, and any new interpretation would have great difficulty in making its way, because it would necessarily follow from its adoption, that others were imperfect, if not erroneous.”

of immoral publications has been stated at twenty-nine millions, being more than the total united issues of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the Religious Tract Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Scottish Bible Society, the Trinitarian Bible Society, and some seventy religious Magazines.”

A well-known publisher lately gave the following public testimony:—“The circulation of pernicious publications is immense. In 1845, it was calculated that from London alone, there was an yearly circulation of stamped and unstamped newspapers and serials, of a *decidedly pernicious* character, to the extent of 28,862,000.” He calculates the present circulation in London of immoral unstamped publications at 20,800,000 yearly. “Publications of an immoral tendency are sold by thousands,—70,000, 80,000 or 100,000 copies are no unusual number; while writings to counteract such poison sell only by hundreds.”—See *Record*, April 29, 1852. With such a flood did Voltaire and his clique pollute France; and similar efforts are now making to corrupt England.

¹ See Appendix A.

But we do not ask the public to consider our difficulties; we merely intreat them to hear us in full—to awaken from their dangerous apathy towards this divine book—and to lay to heart God's reiterated promise regarding it: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand."¹

Our appeal to the public is the more earnest, because we cannot expect to be favourably received by the great bulk of commentators, with whom we differ. They have been heard during long years,—we solicit only a similar number of hours. For centuries they have followed the same beaten path; difficulty and doubt, confusion and uncertainty mark their track. We have followed a new and untrodden one. Our position is as singular as it is difficult; the timid may term it as bold as it is rash. But to every attack—and no man ever yet fought earnestly in the ranks of truth without attack—we have but one answer, "Hear us first, and then speak."

The fair play accorded by Englishmen in every arena demands this,—truth and justice call for it,—and we ask no more.

Our most earnest wish is, that every word of error writ by us may perish, and we bear its reproach; and that every word of truth may triumph, and God have the glory. For self, whatever the issue, we crave no indulgence, and we seek no aid; but we call on *every* follower of truth to rally round God's sure

¹ Apo. i. 3.

prophetic light, and save it from the darts and mists of the Adversary, by purging this and every commentary from the errors inseparable, alas ! from the works of man.

We implore, therefore, the thoughtful and devout in our land—alas ! to all others, even the Apocalypse is foolishness—with disordered affections the head never can be sane or sound. Music has no charms to the heartless and the earless, and the “harp of prophecy” thrills only notes of wo, to the unbelieving, the doubting, and the fearful.¹ “All men have not faith,”—but all who have, we implore,—as they value God’s reiterated blessing—as they would be prepared for the days of wo, and of fiery judgment that are coming upon the earth—as they would have our land to be “the hiding-place of God’s power” in the day of his wrath—the ark of safety amid earth’s fiery deluge,—to awake from their apathy—to imitate the wise virgins in all save their slumber—to return to prophecy—to believe that God spake truly when he called it a “sure light ;” “a light shining in a dark place,” and that it was not in vain that he commanded his servants to write the vision so plain upon tables that he that ran might read.

¹ To the fearful, prophecy has but one message: “repent,” change your uncongenial hearts into congenial soil, then and then only can the seed of prophecy take root, grow, and flourish. It is singular that the “fearful” stand first in the category of the lost—Apoc. xxi. 8. Love and fear cannot coexist ; perfect love casts out fear—where fear is, love is not. Filial fear God requires—servile fear is an abomination unto him. “The righteous are bold as a lion”—Prov. xxviii. 1 ; but fear is the sinner’s portion in this world and in the next.

The waters of Europe roar, her mountains shake, and England may soon be "carried into the midst of the sea."¹ The Apocalypse is at once her compass, her anchor, and her chart; with it she may sail safely through the surrounding gloom, in the midst of which other empires are now doubtfully groping their way, and vainly struggling for existence. Fall they must, because God himself has spoken it; and if Britain falls not, it can only be, because her stay was in Him

" Whose nod is nature's birth,
And nature's shield the shadow of His hand,
Her dissolution, His suspended smile."

Our task is done—we have but one wish left, and that is, to make known what we humbly hope may, with God's blessing, prove useful to the church; but we cannot do so, if the public ear is heavy and will not hear. For ourselves, we have already reaped far more than our deserts: in seasons of trial and depression, our labours have abundantly realized God's promise to give "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." If man acknowledges our labour less graciously, it is only what the history and analogy of wellnigh six thousand years lead us fully to expect. "Shall we receive good at God's hands, and shall we not receive evil" at those of the Adversary and his instruments. But come what may, we trust we shall ever feel grateful for the high privilege which has, in

¹ Ps. xlv. — Waters are the well-known symbol of multitudes; mountains, of kingdoms; and sea, of society convulsed.

the course of God's providence, been granted us, of exercising our rude pen, and ruder powers, on so holy, so ennobling, so divine a subject.

"How charming is Divine philosophy !
Not harsh and crabbed as dull fools suppose,
But musical as is Apollo's lute,
And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,
Where no crude surfeit reigns."

—MILTON.

SKETCH

OF THE

STRUCTURE OF PROPHECY AND OF THE APOCALYPSE.

THE Apocalypse, or, in plain English, "The Unveiling," is emphatically the book of the age. The rapid whirl of passing events baffle alike our writers and our statesmen. While we write, England's great mouthpiece says, "No man will dare to predict what to-morrow will bring forth, either to his country or himself. What was inconceivable yesterday, is a matter of history to-day. The truth is, we find ourselves in the presence of a danger which defies all calculation."¹ Even those events clearly foreseen, dismay and confound our expectations, by anticipating them in point of time, and by far exceeding them in reality. Of this the Revolution of 1848 was a striking proof; equally so that of 1851, and others are not far distant.

In this dilemma, when God is evidently bringing man's wisdom to nothingness, His own book, called "the unveiling" of the future, is assuredly our best and only resource. God deems it so, for while all

¹ See *Times* of 23d January 1852.

else fails, He is pouring a flood of light upon it; and the man that deems it so, and anchors on it his faith and trust, shall never be dismayed or confounded.

Let us look to it, then, whether by viewing this divine book under a new phase and structure, it does not become what God has declared it, "A Sure Light," and not what man has made it, an arena only for controversy and doubt.

Existing Schemes of Interpretation. 2. There are at present three schools, each viewing the Apocalypse differently. The Præterist, the Futurist, and the Protestant.

First, The Præterists consider the Apocalypse past, and fulfilled in the Jewish nation and in Pagan Rome. This scheme originated with the Jesuit Alcasar, and has been followed, *mutata mutanda*, by Grotius, Hammond, Bossuet, Eichhorn, Lee, Moses Stuart, and by disciples of the German school. It vainly¹ tries to screen Papal Rome from the denunciations of the Apocalypse.

Second, The Futurists consider the Apocalypse to be wholly unfulfilled, and to relate to events yet future, which are all to take place at the second advent. Their names are Maitland, Burgh, Todd, Newman, Govett, M'Causland, Kelly, &c. Their scheme we believe to be opposed alike to Scripture,

¹ Grant with them that the Babylon of the Apocalypse fell when Pagan Rome fell. St John says, "Babylon is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit."—Rev. xviii. 2. Then, according to Papal Rome's own advocates, *she* is "the hold of every foul spirit, and the habitation of dragons!"

analogy, and reason; while such theories as that the ancient Babylon is to revive, and be again destroyed, in order to literally fulfil the details of the Apocalypse, are at war with the obvious structure of prophecy, which is ever amplifying¹ and deepening in intensity.

Third, The Protestant school apply the several Apocalyptic visions to the great events affecting the church and Christendom, from St John's time to the consummation; arranging the visions chronologically, and limiting them to one or other of those great events.² The leaders are Mede, Vitranga, Newton, Whiston, Sir I. Newton, Daubuz, Brightman, Hales, Faber, Habershon, Scott, Bickersteth, Cunningham, Fere, Lloyd, Keith, Elliott, and other eminent commentators. Mr Elliott is by far the ablest pioneer on the path of truth that has yet appeared, and to him the church is largely indebted.

The diversities in this, the most popular school, are almost endless. According to Mr Elliott, the fifth seal is the era of Pagan martyrs under Diocletian; and the sixth seal that of Constantine's triumph over Paganism. According to Mr Habershon, also an eminent commentator, the fifth seal is the Reformation, and the sixth the French Revolution! Moreover, as has been well said, "What is affirmed as

¹ See Intro. i. 4.

² The reader may consult Mr Elliott's "History of Apocalyptic Interpretation."—H. Ap. iv. It is, like all Mr Elliott's work, admirable. He will there find that we have exhibited the existing schools and theories accurately.

indisputably true by the one, is as flatly contradicted by the other;"¹ hence the multitude argue, that amid so much doubt, truth is unattainable; and that it is impossible to decide where the greatest lights of the age unceasingly differ. Ay! and differ, not always as Christian writers, but at times as heathen wrestlers for the mastery. The injury thus done to prophecy is incalculable; thousands who approach to sip its living waters, retire declaring them to be turned to gall and wormwood; and the thirsting myriads whom their Lord is lovingly inviting to its pellucid fountains, are instantly scared by the war of words which is raging on its margin. The church has much to answer for in this respect. It is true that God evolves good even from controversy; as he did the Reformation from the infamous blasphemy of Tetzels; but he will assuredly require at the hands of these disturbers of the pure and living waters of Christianity, the blood of those who have been deterred by endless doubts and vainer janglings, from approaching and tasting them.

One main feature pervades all these schools²—DIS-UNION. Numerous as are the works, we defy any one to find two wherein harmony prevails! On the other hand, one main feature pervades all Scripture—UNION. Numerous as are its writers, we defy any

¹ Michaelis' Bible.

² A late able writer* on Elliott's *Horæ Apocalyptice* says, "For ourselves we are free to confess that we see very great difficulties in the way of all the systems hitherto propounded. We cannot subscribe to any of them. We feel like men in quest of a guide, casting their eyes about for light in all directions."—*Journal of Prophecy*, xiii. 370.

one to find two words not in perfect harmony ! Disunion, then, and discord, are the characteristics of our commentaries ; union and harmony those of the subject commented on.

The inference is obvious,—we are not in the path of truth. We must alter our course, shift our sails, look more to our compass and our chart, and less to man ; take a wholly new tack, or we never shall get into the wake of Scripture.

New Scheme of Interpretation. 3. To the above three schemes we propose, in dependance on Divine aid, to add a fourth. It is as follows :—

THE PROPHETS COMMONLY SEE A VISTA OF TYPES AND ANTITYPES, FROM THE PRIMARY AND IMMEDIATE ONE, TO THE REMOTE AND ULTIMATE ONE—LIKE GLASSES IN A TELESCOPE, MUTUALLY AIDING AND BEARING OUT EACH OTHER, AND THOUGH DISTINCT, APART, AND SEPARATE, APPEARING LIKE ONE AND THE SAME.

Thus we believe are the events of prophecy arranged: thus likewise those of history. Hence their perfect keeping. One course of history shadows forth a subsequent course, one stratum of events typifies or depicts another stratum; while prophecy and history mutually run, in cognate streams of homogeneous events, down to the sea of glory—the consummation.

Whether by taking this new course we shall secure that harmony which pervades Holy Writ, and must therefore pervade its commentaries, our readers will soon be in a position to judge.

Wherein we Differ from Existing Schemes.

4. According to the most popular view of the Apocalypse, that of Elliott and Cumming, prophecy is limited to one fulfilment. In our view, prophecy has REITERATED FULFILMENTS, AND MANIFOLD APPLICATIONS. According them, each vision is an event; in our view, each vision is a STREAM of events; or a vista shooting far into futurity, and using whatever is conspicuously revealed on its foreground, to illustrate all kindred events, down to the grand terminus of all things—the day of judgment. According to them, we have in the Apocalypse but one or two types of that day; according to us, every thing, alike in history and in Scripture, is typical thereof; we have ¹ enumerated only a portion of the types of the first advent, yet the number is 114; and are we not to expect many of the second? Let the reader consider ² that day as set forth by God himself. Vast as is the scope and depth of Scripture language, the prophets seem to labour for words adequate to depict its terrors, its joys, its sublimity. And of such a day, shall man, by “limiting the Holy One of Israel,” deprive us of wellnigh every type? No! it is to this day of terrors that the Apocalypse ultimately points, with its thousand unerring indices; while, with godlike compass, the prophetic words seize on every intermediate day, on every intermediate event, and make all combine to form an ever accumulating “cloud of witnesses,” drawing and propelling man to knowledge, to wisdom, and to truth.

¹ Intro. ix. 15.

² *Vide* Ap. G. and H., Extracts from Holy Writ relating to Second Advent.

Harmony restored
to Prophecy.

5. We differ, then, from all existing schools as to the structure of prophecy; but grant our view correct and scriptural, as we hope to prove it, and all past differences, which have reached so lamentable a pitch that the "light" of prophecy is wholly obscured by them, do but become so many beacon-lights on the path of prophecy,—so many additional keys to the portals of futurity. Harmony is strength, and discord is weakness; and the Spirit of Error, by sowing so abundantly the seeds of the latter, and scattering to the four winds those of the former, has successfully striven to deprive the church of this great weapon of her warfare, which her God had prepared for her against the evil day; and that, too, at the very moment when man's discernment of the future began utterly to fail, and God's promise¹ to reveal it was his only stay.

On the Limiting of
Scripture.

6. We regret to express the slightest variance with our ablest and most popular writers, Elliott and his followers,—men at whose feet we are unworthy to sit,—but it is essential to a right understanding of the matter, that we state wherein our view of the structure of prophecy differs from theirs. They limit the visions of the Apocalypse to one fulfilment; the first seal is the golden age of Rome, another the era of Caracalla's decree, another that of Constantine, another the era of martyrs,² and so on throughout the trumpets and

¹ "Surely the Lord will do nothing but he revealeth his secret unto his servants, the prophets."—Amos iii. 7.

² See Gen. Rem. vi.

vials. But where is the scriptural authority for such limitation? Take any portion of Holy Writ,—the Psalms, for instance. They have manifold accomplishments and applications—to David, to Christ, to his church, and to each and every member thereof; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile. This on the side of truth; while on that of error, the Spirit of Error, and his apostate church, and each and every member thereof, are referred to, directly and indirectly, by implication, intimation, and contrast. Were we to limit the Psalms, as our best commentators limit the far ranging vistas of the Apocalypse, to one event, we should curtail them of their godlike beauties and perfections, and reduce them to mere history, each sentence having a solitary reference to David, or the person or event primarily and most prominently referred to. It has been well said,¹ “Too many commentators show a readiness to deal with the Apocalypse, as if it were a crude mass of isolated sketches; ‘a mere picture-gallery.’” These pictures, too, are framed with commencing and closing dates, as if God had said to man, “It is for you to know all times and seasons:” instead of, “It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father has put in his own power.”² A glance at Mr Elliott’s chart will show that each vision is defined by A. D. so and so: and the same system pervades most prophetic writings. For instance, Dr Cumming makes the startling assertion, “The fourth vial closed at the battle of Wagram;” and one late work has a marginal

¹ “Atlas of Prophecy.”

² Acts i. 7.

column for dates, wherein the beginning and close of each vision are duly recorded.

Now, God has purposely veiled all times and seasons. One most important one of 1260 days and years, he has revealed six times in Scripture, yet so revealed, that no man shall say exactly where it begins and where it ends. Mr Elliott, limiting prophecy as he does, is yet forced to admit two commencements and two terminations, each ranging over an interval of four years, and of seventy-five years. Fleming adds two others, and so on. Our diagrams will, we trust, show that this, and all the periods of prophecy, are, like its accomplishments, reiterated. Of Daniel's period of seventy weeks, upwards of twenty different applications have been given. So, too, with all the revealed periods of prophecy; they are so revealed, that man shall not know where they begin, or where they end, while his expectancy is kept ever on the stretch;¹ and by this simple plan, God has in every age forced the church to obey his command, "watch." We see her doing so in the days of the apostles, and we see her doing so in our own; while in every intermediate age, she has waited and longed for His appearing and kingdom. Such being the law of Scripture, even as to REVEALED periods, there must surely be some fundamental error in the systems which fix to a year and day periods wholly UNREVEALED.

Disjoining of
Prophecy at war
with Analogy.

7. This mode of disjoining prophecy,
by seeing it fulfilled in detached frag-

¹ See note Apo. ix. 15.

ments of Pagan and Papal history, is not only dissonant with the nature of prophecy, but is at war with God's usual mode of dealing, in which perfect unity, and unbroken progression, are conspicuous. *Nihil per saltum*, or in other words, successive and unbroken streams, are his law; and we see myriad circumstances great and small, all coalescing and working together towards one and the same end—the regaining, by the Second Adam, of the paradise lost by the first. There is no such thing as isolation in any of God's works,¹ words, or providential dealings, whether with nations, or with individuals:

¹ It has since occurred to us that our view of the structure of Holy Writ is in harmony with the "law of continuity" held by many Christian philosophers, as pervading all nature, but especially geometry and mathematics. Some have abused it by pushing it to extremes, for this, in a world of error, no truth has yet escaped; but held with those limitations which Scripture imposes, it is a truth of which our daily experience convinces us. Helvetius says, "I wish only to prove that nature never proceeds *per saltum*, and that the law of continuity is always exactly observed." That the truth is a very important one, we read in the fact of its being overlaid by error, for the mystery of error rarely exerts his energies to oppose unimportant truths. See App. A.

Even blundering sciolists see this obvious law of nature, and argue therefrom that all is progressive development, and man but the product of one universal and unbroken series which they impiously add must eventually end in a God! Now, there is not one instance in creation of the transmutation of species; the inference, therefore, is as crude as it is impious. Would these so-called philosophers see God in chaos? No! not wishing to retain God in their hearts, they find in the clearest proof of his existence, wherewithal to feed the delusion under which Satan has placed them to believe a lie! Unbelievers are the veriest bond-slaves of credulity, blind to the plainest truths, and open to the reception of the most incredible falsehoods. So true it is that "in Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," (Col. ii. 3,) and without Him the finest genius is dross.

This obvious law of progression our commentators overlook. Accord-

all are intimately connected: far less is there isolation in his Apocalypse. It is indeed consonant with man's finite mind to pick this divine fabric of the Infinite to pieces, and to take a beautiful and conspicuous thread in the woof here, or in the warp there, and to cry, Look how complete the fulfilment! here is all of which God spake! forgetting that God ever selects the beautiful and the conspicuous to illustrate all kindred matter. The children of Israel were charged with limiting the Holy One of Israel. The scheme to which we object, of seeing of the Apocalypse fulfilled in one event, is, we think, open to that charge. Nor is the scheme analogous with God's usual procedure, which gives us shadow upon shadow, type upon type, warning upon warning, that the righteous may be prepared, and the wicked be without excuse. That this is His mode of dealing, He has himself declared; and with Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. "Precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little."¹ Such is the structure of the entire prophetic Word; but if we see plenary fulfilments, in the partial fulfilments of prophecy, which are only foreshadows of coming events, how shall we be prepared for that Day of days, whose hideous terrors² and stupendous joys, God is even

ing to one the sixth seal is the era of Constantine, according to another the era of the French Revolution! Their rule is, *Semper per saltum*.

¹ Isaiah xxviii. 10.

² See passages of Holy Writ relating to Second Advent in Appendix G. and H.

now depicting through myriad intermediate signs? All in the old dispensation, shadowed forth the first advent; all in the new, shadows forth the second. While both commingle their several kindred streams, and speeding onward, widening and deepening as they flow, ever and anon gathering newer and more intense shadows, they simultaneously disembody their mighty contents into the sea of glory—earth's eternal Sabbath.

The first advent itself was but a type of the second, a mighty link in that vast progressive chain, which connects the First Genesis with the Second,—earth's Creation with earth's Re-creation.

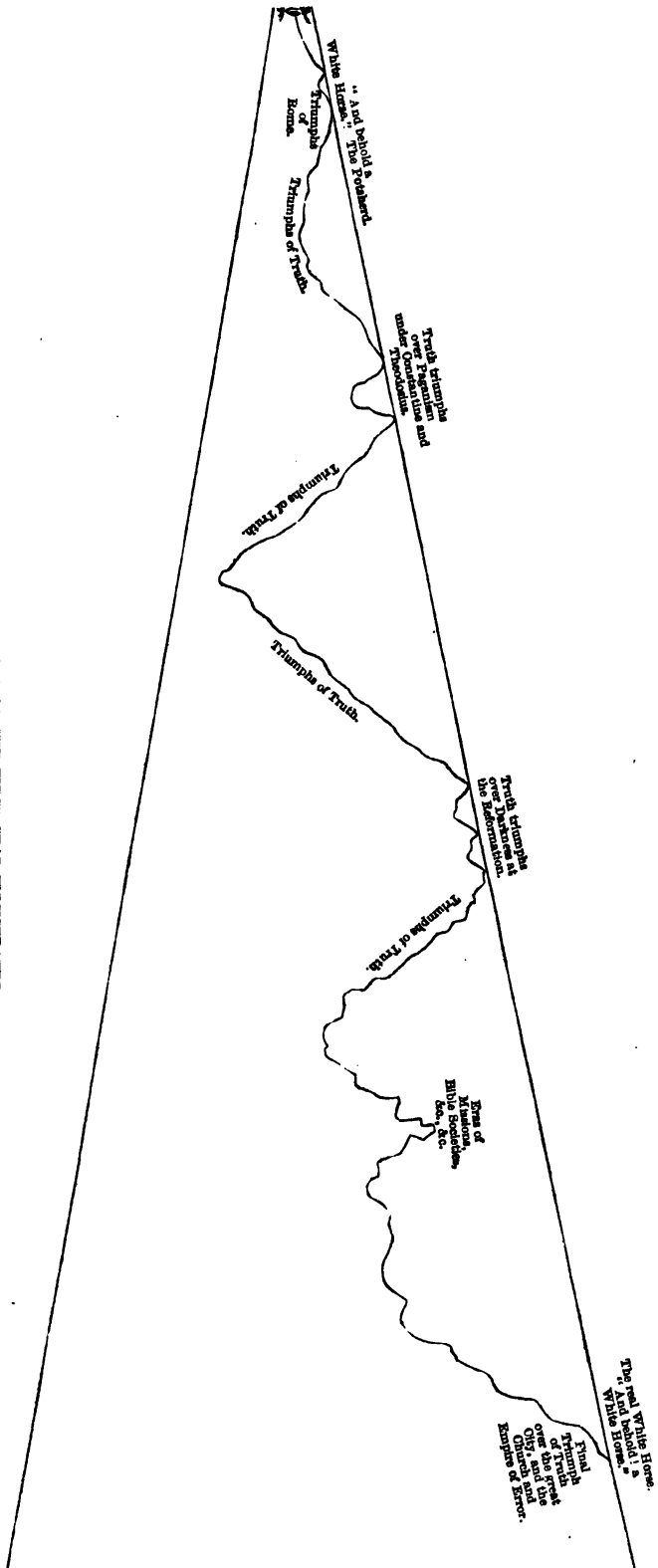
Then was the adversary partially checked and bound,¹—a sure earnest of that time when, being wholly bound, “they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.”

Our Scheme Illustrated, and the Vista System Explained.

8. But to return to our own scheme. The adjoined pictorial sketch of the first seal will show at a glance the main features of our theory. We believe every vista of the Apocalypse to be similarly constructed: each being, not an event, but a *STREAM OF EVENTS*, standing in the relation of types, prototypes, and antitypes, all having their origin in early Scripture, and their final issue in the consummation. Our chart gives a combined sketch of all the vistas, and is constructed on the principle of Eastern scrolls.² It is a mere skeleton of the Apo-

¹ Luke ix. ; x. 17; John xii. 31; Heb. ii. 14; 1 John v. 18.

² See notes Apo. x. 2.



THE VISTA OF THE FIRST SEAT ILLUSTRATED.

calypse, and cannot of itself make the prophecy plain ; but it will prove of the same use to the reader, that a sketch-map does to the student of history or geography. It will show him the course and burden of each vision, and its ultimate issue in the day of judgment.

The Bible is perfect unity: Genesis and Revelation are, as we have shown,¹ intimately connected:—the one is but the consummation of the other; and without a knowledge of the latter, we cannot adequately understand the former. The word PROPHECY alarms us; we immediately associate it with something mysterious and difficult, yet the original means simply to TEACH. All Scripture teaches, and consequently all Scripture is prophetic, though some portions are pre-eminently so. But God's words and works are in perfect unison and harmony; hence history also is prophetic,—nature is prophetic,—language is prophetic,—philosophy is prophetic. Man's experience, nature, heart, soul, and conscience are prophetic; for from each and all, he may, by Divine aid, draw important lessons for the future.

Structure of Prophecy.

9. But let us look to Scripture for the structure of prophecy: and take the very first example that meets us—"God rested the seventh day." These few and simple words have, besides their literal and historic application, an important prophetic burden, reaching from God's first rest, down to his everlasting rest,² which St Paul tells us

¹ See Intro. i. 3, 4.

² Heb. iv. 9.

remaineth for the people of God. Week after week, month after month, year after year, age after age, is this prophecy repeated, not in word only, but in deed. The prophecy is re-enacted every Sabbath, and will continue to be so, until all types have merged in the one great antitype. Here, then, we have a stream or vista of types, connecting the creation with the consummation by a serried and unbroken chain. And as if to show us that we are not in a long chain of types to look for the "very image"¹ of the antitypes or prototypes, ever and anon at stated intervals, two momentous Sabbaths recur, as prominent points in the vista, consolidating and substantiating the whole by their massive grandeur. They are, the seven times seventh year,² or "the year of jubilee;" and the seventh³ year, or "the year of the Lord's release." We have the express authority⁴ of Holy Writ for assigning this prophetic burden to our Sabbath days. Nor have we yet reached their utmost meaning, for we are further told⁵ that Christ is the Sabbath or rest of every soul, and to it He is ever inviting us. The finite mind works to one end: the Infinite makes one event subserve a myriad ends.

Now, it is not consonant with God's usual procedure, to give us many illustrations of one general and all pervading truth; He commonly gives only one, and allows man thence to infer all others. Hence the marvellous brevity and vast scope of Holy Writ.

¹ Heb. x. 1.² Lev. xxv.³ Deut. xv.⁴ Col. ii. 17; Apo. i. 11, notes.⁵ Matt. xi. 28-30; Isa. xxviii. 12.

Nor are many examples necessary with One, whose system is uniform, and with whom is no variable-ness. "I am the Lord, I change¹ not," is His declaration—hence each example becomes a rule, applicable to all, and throughout all ages. Accordingly we shall find all prophecy similarly constructed.

Instance of the
Reiteration of Pre-
phesy.

9. Take, for instance, the simple prophecy, "The Lord is at hand." How manifold are its fulfilments and applications, all running, like the Sabbaths, in one continuous and unbroken stream, to that final coming, when He that shall come, will come, to shake, not the earth only, but also heaven!

To believers, the Lord is ever at hand. "I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." This coming into each renewed heart, Paley considered so marked, that 'a man could no more remain ignorant of it, than of his escape from shipwreck.' And to each it may be said, "Arise and shine, for thy light has come, and the glory of God hath risen upon thee."

Again, the Lord is ever coming to judge and punish his enemies, and to reward his servants. Even the heathen saw this,—hence their Nemesis.

The Lord is ever at hand, a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, to lead his church and followers through the dark strife which is ever raging between

¹ Mal. iii. 6.

truth and error.¹ Hence he is justly termed "the Leader and Commander" of his people; and but for his ever present help, his "little flock" must ere this have infallibly perished before the overwhelming number of their foes.²

The Lord's first coming to judgment followed the fall; and, but that "in the midst of judgment, God remembered mercy," mankind had then perished everlastingly.

The next coming to judgment was at the flood. "Behold he cometh with clouds," and the clouds that darkened heaven, deluged a perishing world. Most numerous have been his other comings to judgment; history is replete with them. Egypt, Samaria, Jerusalem,³ Rome, Constantinople, France, and Papal Christendom, are only a few instances of the many, and all combine to shadow forth that great final coming to judgment, whose hideous terrors, and stupendous joys, necessarily call for many types.

But there is one coming of our Lord which more immediately concerns every soul; his coming at the hour of death. This coming is momentary, for no moment flies wherein some one soul does not wing

¹ See Apo. vi. and subsequent chapters, and Appendix A., where this war is fully detailed.

² See Intro. vii.

³ Our Lord said to his disciples, when they questioned him as to St John's fate, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"—John xxi. 22. Did not our Lord here refer to his coming at the destruction of Jerusalem, one great type of his personal coming to destroy the Jerusalem of the Gentiles? It is the mode of Scripture to speak of type and antitype as one.

its flight to the realms of spirits. Thus Christ not only comes to us during life, and makes a temple of our hearts wherein to set his throne; but he comes at death, and will yet finally come to destroy both death and hell. All this is in beautiful keeping with our Lord's designation, "The Coming One."¹

Here, then, as in the Sabbath days, we have an unbroken stream of similar events, all standing in the relation of types and shadows, and all pointing to, and prophesying of, that final coming, which is "the hope of Israel."² And thus is this simple prophecy unceasingly repeated, not in words only, but in signs, and in deeds. From moment to moment, from hour to hour, from age to age, all nature, all history, all Scripture, ring with the solemn warning, "The Lord is at hand." But "man's ear is heavy that it cannot hear," and stupified with his opiate slumbers, he replies, "Where is the promise of his coming?" And thus "as it was in the days of Noah, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Further Instance. 11. Take the simple petition in

¹ ὁ ἔρχόμενος. He who is coming; the participle implying CONTINUITY.—Matt. xl. 3; John vi. 14; viii. 58. "He came BEFORE his coming." "He came in all the purifications of the old law, that were made by water (and many and various they were) and also by blood." "Christ, who will hereafter come on the clouds of heaven with his holy angels, HAS come, and comes daily to you on the clouds of apostles and prophets."—Wordsworth on the Apocalypse. We never saw this book until our MSS. were made over to the publishers; our agreement is therefore unintentional.

² "Looking for that Blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ."—Titus ii. 13.

our Lord's prayer, "Thy kingdom come." With myriad intermediate applications and fulfilments, it ranges to the end of time, to that "kingdom which shall never be destroyed."¹ "Behold," says our Lord, "the kingdom of God is within you;" plainly showing that the petition is primarily fulfilled, in every heart which by repentance admits God to dwell in it. Then is the "kingdom come" to that soul, a sure earnest of his inheritance in the final kingdom, eternal in the heavens. 'Unless,' said our Lord to the Pharisees,² 'my kingdom come into your hearts, ye cannot come into my everlasting kingdom.'

Again, God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and took a rib from his opened side and made woman, and gave her to him as his bride. This shadows forth, as is well known, the flowing of the Gentile church from the wounded side of the Second Adam, together with the ultimate marriage of the Lamb and his bride.³ Of this event Holy Writ considers every earthly marriage a type.⁴ Here, then, we have an unbroken chain of types, connecting the first earthly marriage with the last heavenly one.

Or take the prophecy that the woman's Seed shall bruise the serpent's head, what a vista have we here! what endless mechanism required to guide this saying to its close! a war between truth and error

¹ Dan. ii. 44.

² Luke xvii. 20, 21; Matt. xii. 28; John iii. 4, 5; Romans ii. 29; Gal. vi. 15; 2 Cor. v. 17. The reader may examine in Cruden all the passages relating to the kingdom.

³ Apo. xix. 7, notes.

⁴ Eph. v. 23, 32; Rev. xix. 7-9.

raging unceasingly for 6000 years! during every hour of which the prophecy is more or less reiterated, as a perusal of chapter vi. and of App. A. will convince the reader.

Further Instance
of the Reiteration
of Prophecy.

12. Or take the law; all its rites were, St Paul tells us, "shadows of things to come, not the **VERY IMAGE** of those things."¹ Each performance of each and every rite, was but a renewal of the prophecy contained in the original institution of that rite; and all combined to form from day to day, and from year to year, an ever accumulating stream of types and shadows, pointing to that higher ritual in the heavenly temple, and to its High Priest, in whom all rites, all types, all precepts, all events, all prophecies, and all promises, centre and are fulfilled.

While such is the onward tendency of all things to the centre of the universe, why does man's heart—fertile only in its own disgrace—alone stand aloof? The reason is obvious, the Spirit of Error² working in him, and through him, clogs his heavenward progress, and drags him down to the abyss!

It is the unceasing object of Providence, throughout His word and works, to keep up a constant intercourse between heaven and earth, thereby to bind the soul of man to the footstool of the Almighty. And in such a scheme, where shall we find room for the isolation, and disunion of events, with which, according to man, prophecy is replete? Let religion

¹ Heb. x. 1. Intro. ix. 15.

² Appendix A. and Apo. vi.

be but firmly established in the soul, and we are already anchored on the Rock of Ages, and bound to the Ancient of Days, by a connection that shall never be dissolved. And it is with a view to propel and draw man into this connection, that all Scripture, all history, and all nature flow in continuous and irresistible streams toward heaven, and reveal to us, in the light of Him who is there enthroned, the moving springs of all creation, and the grand issue of all his wondrous works. On the other hand, let us not forget, that opposed to this "mystery of godliness," stands a counter "mystery of iniquity," having for every act and strategy of truth, a counter act and strategy of error.¹ All pertaining to these great mysteries culminates in two points; and our world may be fitly compared to two vast pyramids meeting at the base, the point of the one embosomed in heaven, the other in the abyss of hell. On their four quarters lie all the myriad gradations by which mankind are led by the Spirit of Truth to the pinnacle of happiness, and by the Spirit of Error to the abyss of misery.

Further Instance. 13. "In like manner, when Israel was troubled by reason of sin, 'they cried unto the Lord and he raised up saviours,' temporal deliverers, who shadowed forth the mighty Deliverer yet to come; and not only temporal deliverers, but spiritual teachers and prophets, as well as heroes, IN A LONG CONTINUED LINE. Even the things they desired, God made

¹ See Appendix A.

types and examples both of his divine government, and of his future designs.”¹ And precisely as God used all ancient history to typify and illustrate that day for which the church then longed and looked; so now does he use all modern history—as we hope to prove—to shadow forth that far greater day for which the church now looks and longs.

We have, then, in the above, a constant renewal or reiteration of prophecy, stretching through a long line of individuals, all of whom, by signs, words, and actions, variously depict Him who is the Alpha and Omega of the universe.

The histories of Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Moses, Aaron, Belzeleel, Aholiab, Phinehas, Joshua, Gideon, Samson, Boaz, Samuel, Daniel, Solomon, Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, Eliakim, Daniel, Zerubabel, Joshua, John the Baptist,² and many others, are all illustrations of our position. Nor are we limited to Scripture, for in history we have an Augustine, and a Luther, and a Wilberforce, and a Chalmers, a Shaftesbury, and an Elliott, and myriad others of God's children in a long progressive line. This continuous line Mr Elliott admits, and ably traces in the two witnesses. Now, all these persons have more or less taught—or, what is the same thing, prophecied of—the great Antitype, by their words, lives, and actions. The typical bio-

¹ Douglas on Structure of Prophecy.

² See Brown's Bible, Chapter iii., on Types, where all the Scriptural authorities for each type are given.

graphies of Scripture, have therefore been re-enacted by all God's children—and thus each subject, though “dead, yet speaketh;”—re-enacted, it may be, by less pure and less holy shadows, but still, more or less,—according to ever-varying circumstances,—partially re-enacted, and therefore partially fulfilled.

And as it is with the prophecies, so it is with the promises of Holy Writ. They have been more or less accomplished in all the children of God, in all ages. And the only obstacle to their full accomplishment in each child, is our slowness to appropriate them, and our backwardness to fit ourselves for their reception.

We trust, then, the reader is already beginning to question that theory, which sees prophecy fulfilled in disjointed fragments of Pagan history here, or of Papal history there; and now inclines to think that its vistas may run in unbroken **STREAMS** of types, prototypes, and antitypes, from the source to the consummation.

This progression is one of God's golden rules, pervading alike Scripture, history, and nature, and in reading prophecy we must not, at our peril, desert it.

Prophecy selects
the Present to illus-
trate the Future.

14. But we must further examine the structure of prophecy, as set forth in Scripture; there we find it for the most part occupied with passing events, but using them mainly to illustrate the future. By this beautiful device the ever present events of history are made prophetic of all ulterior ones. The seers of old selected

familiar and daily occurrences to illustrate God's providential dealings. Jeremiah, through the medium of the potter's wheel and clay, shows how God handles Israel.¹ By his linen girdle, which he is directed to mar, he illustrates how God "will mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem."² By two baskets of good and evil figs, he portrays God's dealings with the good and evil captives of Judah.³ By bonds and yokes placed on his neck, he typifies the thralldom of Babylon over all nations.⁴ The seer is also made to buy a field, for the right of redemption and inheritance was his, and by the details of this transaction, he shows that Israel should have their lost inheritance purchased back by Christ, and their land redeemed.⁵ By breaking a potsherd, he typifies the breaking in pieces and scattering of Judah.⁶ And lastly, we find him using even names typically and prophetically.⁷

We likewise find Ezekiel ordered to take a tile, and portray thereon the siege of Jerusalem: he enacts the entire siege in miniature, even to the famine.⁸ In another vision, the destruction of the prophet's hair is made to typify that of Jerusalem.⁹ In another, a chain is made the type of the captivity.¹⁰ In another, he is made to remove his household stuff, in illustration of the removal of King

¹ Jer. xviii.² Jer. xiii.³ Jer. xxiv.⁴ Jer. xxvii., xxviii.⁵ Jer. xxxii.⁶ Jer. xix.

⁷ Jer. xx. 3. We shall find as we proceed that historical names are full of teaching, and consequently prophetic: here and elsewhere Scripture and history are in perfect keeping.

⁸ Ezek. iv.⁹ Ezek. v.¹⁰ Ezek. vii.

Zedekiah and the Jews into captivity.¹ In another, the seer is made to eat his bread with quaking, and to drink water with trembling and carefulness, in order to typify Israel's desolation, fear, and famine.² A vine branch is similarly used;³ also two eagles and a vine;⁴ and lion's whelps;⁵ and even the prophet's sigh,⁶ to which the people say, "Wherefore sighest thou?" and the reply is, "For the tidings because it cometh; and every heart shall melt, and all hands shall be feeble, and every spirit shall faint, and all knees shall be weak as water; behold it cometh, and shall be brought to pass." Many other instances of illustrating prophecy by passing events might be adduced, but we shall only observe that Ezekiel largely uses present phraseology, laws, customs, institutions, and rites to illustrate the restored earthly temple;⁷ while we find Jeremiah selecting King Zedekiah's false proclamation of liberty, to depict God's proclamation of liberty to Judah;⁸ and Jonadab's dealings with the Rechabites, to illustrate God's dealings with his children.⁹ Hosea's marriages are made to illustrate his visions.

And what is the object of all these typical acts and events? It is, we are told, that the people may inquire, "What doest Thou?"¹⁰ We are apt to think that in our day prophecy is silent; in one sense it is so, it has spoken "seven times,"¹¹ and consequently nothing remains unsaid. But in another sense pro-

¹ Ezek. xii.² Ezek. xii. 18.³ Ezek. xv.⁴ Ezek. xvii.⁵ Ezek. xix.⁶ Ezek. xxi.⁷ Ezek. xl.-xlviii.⁸ Jer. xxxiv. 17.⁹ Jer. xxxv.¹⁰ Ezek. xii.¹¹ Intro. i.

phesy is ever speaking ; we have not now a Jeremiah or an Ezekiel, as Judah had, but we have ALL the prophets. We have not, it is true, a seer heaving a deep-drawn sigh, or shivering a potsherd, or removing his household stuffs in our streets ; but God is causing all nature¹ to sigh, is shivering kings, princes, authorities, constitutions, and governments, and is removing throne upon throne, and the people ask not, "What doest Thou?" With Judah, a holy seer occasionally enacted prophecy in the market-place of a city ; with us, God is daily and yearly re-enacting prophecy in that grand Plateia of the universe—Papal Christendom. Judah was forced to read God's dealings in the breaking of clay upon the potter's wheel ; we may do so in the breaking of empires, at the touch of the Almighty. Judah was forced to study God's ways and providences only in her own history ; we may read them in that of every nation of the globe. With Judah prophecy was imperfect, her books were few, and her knowledge small. We have the Apocalypse, which consummates all prophecy : we have a press, whereby all God's dealings, and judgments, and mercies, are recorded and proclaimed throughout the universe : and with us knowledge has, as Daniel foretold, vastly increased.² We have in every page of history, the potter and his clay, the potsherd, and the sigh ; and therefore every page of history invites us to inquire, with Israel, "What doest Thou?" Compared with our prophetic light, "on whom the ends of the world have come," Judah's was darkness. We

¹ Rom. viii. 22, 23.

² Dan. xii. 4.

are quick to admit that the sin of the Jewish Church was heinous, and her punishment most due ; but slow to perceive that the Gentile Church has sinned against infinitely greater light, and that her punishment will be infinitely greater ! ¹

But the main lesson to be derived from the above is, that God selects prominent passing events to illustrate the future. This being the rule of the Old Testament, it necessarily follows from God's unchangeableness and all pervading harmony, that it is equally the rule of the New. We shall accordingly find in the Apocalypse that the passing events of Roman, Grecian, and Papal history, are selected to illustrate the several vistas, each of which runs down to the grand terminus of all prophecy, the Day of the Lord.

But if, forsaking this obvious law of prophecy, we see the visions of the Apocalypse *fulfilled* in those fragments of Pagan and Papal history, which are but shadows and illustrations of the future, we are enacting the part of those, who, in the breaking of Jeremiah's potsherd, or in his linen girdle, or in the potter's clay, saw the fulfilment of each vision. What should we think of him who, in the death of the first serpent slain by man, saw the accomplishment of the prophecy, man "shall bruise thy head?" ² Or of him who saw the fulfilment of the prediction, "There shall come a star out of Jacob," ³ in the literal star, whose only office was, to illustrate the Holy Babe in the manger? Let us cease, then, longer to confound shadows and fulfilments; they are as distinct as

¹ See App. H; Intro. i. 4. ² Gen. iii. 15. ³ Num. xxiv. 17.

summer and the signs of summer. The signs of the Apocalypse, or its intermediate and typical accomplishments, we have had in abundance; but its summer is yet to come, when the Sun of Righteousness shall finally arise with healing on his wings, and, in the light of the latter-day glory, fulfil every word and type of Scripture, and every letter and tittle of prophecy.

The Eye and Words of the Seer run along each Vista, and dwell on its most Prominent Points; the Words suiting both Types and Antitypes.

15. There is, however, a further feature in the structure of the prophetic vistas which demands attention. It is this: THE PROPHETS GLANCE ALONG EACH VISTA, AND AS THEIR EYE RESTS NOW ON ONE PROMINENT POINT, NOW ON ANOTHER, AS MOVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, THEIR WORDS DESCRIBE THAT POINT. IN OTHER WORDS, THE EYE AND WORDS OF THE PROPHETS RUN ALONG EACH VISTA OF TYPES AND ANTITYPES, AND DWELL NOW ON ONE, NOW ON ANOTHER, ACCORDING TO THEIR PROMINENCE, AND THE NECESSITIES OF THE PROPHECY.

How obviously is this the case in the sixth¹ seal! and we have ample proof of it throughout Scripture. Let the reader again consult our pictorial sketch of the first seal. The seer says, "I saw, and behold a white horse;" this, though the ultimate, is the most conspicuous object in the vista, hence it is mentioned first. Not that there is not a "potsherd" of a white horse in Pagan history, which is also referred to, and which serves on the foreground to shadow forth the

¹ See Sketch, 26.

great and real white horse. Then a crown was given unto his rider, and he went forth conquering and to conquer. The words, "went forth conquering," bring us back to, and dwell mainly on, the first era of truth; while the words, "and to conquer," take us to the consummation. Thus the language of the vision EQUALLY SUITS THE SHADOWS AND THE FULFILMENT, and runs along the vista as if it were but one massive object, touching more emphatically now one part, now another, while the entire language is so constituted that it applies to the whole stream of types, as well as to each individual one. How God-like is the language of Holy Writ! No man ever wrote like Scripture, and yet every man in Scripture writes alike! And whence this similarity, but because God changes not? Eternity will alone disclose all the beauties and depths of Holy Writ; and that it will be the study of eternity,¹ seems probable from the exact adaptation of the subject to the period; the one infinite, the other eternal. In this our chrysalis state, we know but little of the unfathomable immensity of Scripture; its whole ocean is before us; and in our blindness we have but gathered a few priceless pebbles on its shore! When Christ's everlasting kingdom is set up, we may, as "kings and priests" therein, waft its glad tidings of great joy to

¹ We have shown that all the words, prophecies, and promises of Holy Writ have their myriad applications all running in continuous and unbroken streams; thus is the Scripture fulfilled which saith, "The Word is for yesterday, to-day, and for ever." And on the above supposition, the words "for ever" will be fulfilled, like all Scripture, to the very letter.—See Heb. xiii. 8; and John i. 1.

other perishing worlds, and then learn that there was a meaning of which we dreamt not in the simple words, "Christ died for all."¹

In looking into the prophetic vistas, man sees so darkly and so distantly, that he does but discover one prominent object therein, and then affirms that in it lies the fulfilment. Another seer advances, and influenced differently, he descries another prominent object, affirms that in it is the vision fulfilled, and shows endless flaws in the discovery of his predecessor. And this system has been pursued from year to year, and from generation to generation, through more works than we have space to enumerate.

Now, looking to our pictorial sketch, the reader will perceive in the vista of the first seal several golden eminences, rising higher and higher "till they attain their greatest elevation amidst the serene skies of the latter-day glory." These gilded peaks are the mighty triumphs of truth. At first sight they may appear unconnected, but closer examination proves them to be one continuous and unbroken chain, the intervening valleys, which in the distance are invisible, being composed of the minor triumphs of truth, which daily and hourly take place² in the

¹ There is, perhaps, Scriptural ground for such a surmise. Holy Writ speaks of "spiritual wickedness in heavenly places." We are also told that in God's sight "even the heavens are unclean." While this earth, before evil penetrated it, was in God's sight "all very good." Great is the mystery of error! and it clearly is not limited to this earth, therefore Christ's blood *may* wash away the guilt of many worlds.

² We have since found, that one very just objection urged against Mr Elliott's and similar solutions of the first seal is, that the words "con-

lives and hearts of God's people; if, indeed, man's faltering tongue may term those small triumphs, over each of which the hosts of heaven rejoice. In fine, with Rome's golden era of triumph and victory as its foreground, the vista of the first seal glances through the golden mist of years, down to the gates of Glory!

Proof from Scrip-
ture of the above
Position.

16. The eleventh of Isaiah glances through the first to the second advent, and describes both as if they were one and the same. So do all the ancient prophets. Hence the mistake of the Jews,—they, as the present age is doing, confounded shadows with fulfilments, and therefore overlooked the suffering, and dwelt only on the triumphant Messiah.

The well-known prophecy of Matthew xxiv., glances from the overthrow of Jerusalem on the foreground, down to the overthrow of all things at the last day.¹ It narrates many, if not all homogeneous events, treats the vista as a whole, and dwells, now here, now

quering and to conquer" imply an UNINTERRUPTED SUCCESSION of triumphant wars. Now, this is precisely what our scheme gives, a continuous and unbroken series of triumphs. Truth is daily, hourly, and momentarily triumphing; we saw it triumph, when it went forth to conquer chaos, and that, and every one of its myriad intermediate triumphs, are so many sure earnest of the final victory at Armageddon.

¹ Dr Cumming, in his *Apocalyptic Sketches II.*, attempts to separate this prophecy, and assign certain verses to Jerusalem and the rest to the day of judgment; but his hearers by his own showing remained unconvinced, and the attempt will, we think, be deemed a failure by all who minutely compare the lecture with Scripture.

there, on its conspicuous points, while the language, more or less, suits each and every component part.

Daniel vii. 7, sees Pagan Rome, in the next verse, Papal Rome, and in the next, the days we live in, as well as their final issue, for he says, "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit."

In the twenty-fifth of Jeremiah, the seer using (verse 9) the literal Babylon, and its desolations, as an index of the future, glances therefrom to the general desolations of the earth at the last day (verse 30-33), and then again returns to his first subject. The Holy Spirit, in fact, sees all homogeneous events in one unbroken and continuous stream; to the eye of man alone is the arrangement chaotic, because he views them disjointed and apart.

The last day is so conspicuous,¹ that we frequently find it first referred to. The first four verses of Isaiah xxxiv., bear mainly, though not wholly, upon the day of the Lamb's wrath. Ver. 5, to it and to Idumea, the well-known type of the empire of error. And the following verses again return to the end of all things, with which Idumea is so commingled, that it is difficult² to say whether the seer refers to the

¹ See App. H.

² We find Dean Woodhouse bearing evidence to our position.—"In the prophecies, the calamities of a particular nation or state are so blended and intermixed with that general destruction which will finally overtake all the nations of the earth, that the industry and skill of our best interpreters have not been equal to separate and assort them." (Why should man attempt to separate what God has so intimately joined? Type upon type, precept upon precept, line upon line, is His mode of teaching, or prophecy—for the terms are synonymous. All that is

type or antitype. Difficult, and needless—for the reference is to both, Idumea being only a renewal, by signs and deeds, of the prophecy in words. The 62d chapter of Isaiah mainly refers to the last day, though occupied with the present. In Isaiah xl., the first and second advents are treated as one ; and the latter referred to first, for Jerusalem's warfare can only be finally accomplished,¹ and her iniquity pardoned, at the second advent. Then, too, "shall the glory of the Lord be revealed, and all flesh see it together." Now, these words had a partial fulfilment in the first advent, but have their plenary one in the second.

In the same way we find the two resurrections,—though divided by an interval of at least one thousand years, as all admit, or by 360,000, as some suppose, often blended together, and treated as one and the same. Daniel says, "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting con-

past shadows forth all that is to come. Is it requisite to separate the glasses of a telescope, that we may understand the beautiful vista it discloses?) "Hence," continues the Dean, "it has been concluded by judicious divines that those partial prophecies, whose accomplishment we know has taken place, are types of some greater events which are also disclosed in them. To the dreadful time of universal vengeance, they all appear to *look forward beyond their first and more immediate object*. Little indeed can we doubt that such is to be considered the use and application of these prophecies, since we see them thus applied by our Lord and his Apostles. See Matt. i. 22, 23 ; xxvii. 9 ; John xv. 25 ; xix. 36, 37 ; compare Zech. xii. 10 ; Acts ii. 20, 27 ; compare Joel ii. 29-32 ; iii. 19, 22, 24 ; Heb. ix. 7, 8 ; x. 27, 37 ; Rom. ii. 5 ; Gal. iv. 24 ; Eph. v. 14 ; 2 Thess. ii. 3, &c. ; 2 Pet. iii. 2-14."—Woodhouse on Rev. chap. vi. 16.

¹ App. G.

tempt.”¹ How are we to explain these and the many similar statements, with which Scripture abounds, save by the fact that the prophets look through a vista of kindred events, which, like glasses in a telescope, mutually aid and bear out each other, and though distinct, apart, and separate, appear like ONE AND THE SAME.

Types of the resurrection we have had in Job, Jonah, our Saviour, and many others. But God’s teaching is not confined to Scripture,—history and nature are replete with it. “The heavens declare his glory, and the firmament showeth his handiwork, day unto day uttereth speech, night unto night showeth knowledge.”²

“Wondrous truths, and manifold as wondrous,
God has written in those stars above;
But no less in the bright flow’rets under us,
Stands the revelation of his love.

“Bright and glorious is that revelation,
Written all over this great world of ours,
Making evident our own creation,
In these stars of earth—these golden flowers.”³

Thus every tender herb that bursts the crust of mother earth, is an answer to the question, “Son of man, can these dry bones live?” and clearly explains to us how the apparently powerless dead shall, at the sound of the last trump, uprear their “pillared graves,” however vast the pyramids that man has piled upon them, and “stand up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.”⁴ The prophetic burden

¹ Dan. xii. 2. ² Ps. xix. ³ Longfellow. ⁴ Ezek. xxxvii. 10.

wafted to man by every spring, and by each of the myriad offspring of that spring, is, Resurgam,—that of their hourly growth, Excelsior. Each and every harvest typifies that final “harvest, which is the end of the world.” Each successive vintage depicts that final one, whence “blood shall flow, even unto the horse bridles.” Every tree of the forest points to the tree of life in the paradise of God. The spiritual burden of every rill and fountain, every brook and streamlet, is of that “river clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” The wheat and tares as they grow together, point unmistakeably to that great day when alone they shall be separated and for ever. The peaceful melody of the woods does but reflect the harmony of heaven.

“Each day, each ordered peaceful home,
Foreshadoweth mansions yet to come,
A foretaste in domestic love,
Of faultless charities above!”¹

Each sunrise looks back to that hallowed morn, when the Sun of Righteousness primarily arose with healing on his wings, and forward to the day when He shall finally reappear, “as the lightning from the east shineth unto the west.” Each sunset points retro-

¹ This and like digressions are not introduced because their subject-matter forms an integral or *necessary* part of our prophetic scheme, but simply as being among God’s many and various lessons, whether termed analogy, typology, or otherwise. The universe is the school, God the Preceptor, we the children, and these some of his many modes of teaching. His general teaching in nature by analogy, type, &c., is of course distinct from his particular teaching in the Apocalypse.

spectively to that day when there was darkness over all the land, because its Lord hung bleeding upon the cross, for sins not His own : while it tells, too, of that great future day, when "thick darkness shall cover all the earth," and "all faces gather blackness."¹

The upward glance of the everlasting hills, the heavenward tendency of every tree of the forest, and every herb of the mountain, are but so many beacon-lights on man's path to glory, and he may read the same lesson in the flight of the eagle, and in the song of the lark. All this is in beautiful harmony with man's own designation, "the upward turner of an eye." God said, Let us make man in our image; and into that small word, "Man," he flung a burden of prophecy² which has ever since spoken, and ever shall speak.

"But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee."³ We doubt the existence of any creature, or the occurrence of any incident, not replete with teaching. They all severally speak in parables, and clothe the doctrines of

¹ See App. H.

² *Ἀνθρωπος* from *ανηρ*, man, *ὤψ* the eye, and *επιστω* to turn. A child of the writer, only two years old, when questioned as to the use of her faculties, was asked among other things what her eyes were for. Looking upward, she replied, "To put up to God." The reply was perfectly spontaneous; and we have here an unconscious repetition of the prophecy contained in the word "man," and one among myriad proofs that "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, God has ordained strength."

³ Job xii. 7.

Holy Writ in the language of nature. This language our Lord used, and added, "If ye understand not this parable, how shall ye understand ALL the parables."

Chance is the Atheist's word; and trifles, that of the unthinking. The fall of a pin is neither a chance nor a trifle: it obeys and illustrates an all-pervading law of nature. How many apples fell, before the one which rolled to the feet of Newton, the key of the universe? And why did the myriads who had in all ages witnessed similar incidents fail to derive from them similar instruction,—but because they were slow to understand all that God's mute prophets had spoken?

The mere act of shaking the dust from our feet when we return home is prophetic. It was a law in Israel that all pilgrims should, on entering or returning to the Holy Land, shake off the dust of their wanderings on the border; thereby typifying the soul's shaking off the dust of its earthly pilgrimage on its entrance into the heavenly Canaan. This typical rite we repeat daily and hourly, as oft as we enter each cottage or palace, each hall or hut. It is well said—

"There are no trifles in the biography of man. It is drops that make up the sea; it is acorns that cover the earth with oaks, and the ocean with glorious navies. Sands make up the bar in the harbour's mouth, on which rich argosies are wrecked; and little things in youth accumulate into character in age, and destiny in eternity. All the links in that glorious chain which is in all and around all, we can see and admire, or at least admit; but the staple to which all is fastened, and to which it is the conductor of all, is the throne of Deity."¹

¹ Cumming's God in History.

Proof from the
Psalms, that the
Eye and Words
of the Prophets,
glance to and fro
in each Vista.

17. Let us take one other instance from the Psalms. The 22d, appointed for Good Friday, opens with a prophetic reference to our Saviour's dying agony upon the cross—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" His birth, and all his earthly trials, are then referred to, with most unmistakeable clearness. Then the prophecy again returns to the cross—"They pierced my hands, and my feet." "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." Then follow the triumphs of the gospel—"I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. Ye that fear the Lord, praise him." Then follow the glories of the millennium, when "all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations." What a vista is here! Yet such is the marvellous scope and structure of Scripture language, that this Psalm also applies to David, to the church, and to every individual member thereof, for we are all Christ's brethren,¹ sharers of his sufferings,² of his triumphs,³ of his kingdom,⁴ and of his throne.⁵

It is sometimes asked why John the Baptist is talked of in Scripture as Elias and yet not Elias?⁶

¹ Mark iii. 35.

² 2 Cor. i. 5; Phil. iii. 10; 1 Pet. iv. 13.

³ Apo. ii. 26, 27; Ps. cxlix. 7-9.

⁴ Apo. xx. 4, and Dan. vii. 18-22. ⁵ Apo. iii. 21.

⁶ See Mal. iv. 5, 6; Luke i. 17; Mark ix. 12, 13; John i. 21. The

and the question has not, we believe, been satisfactorily answered. But the vista system explains it, for it is an accurate description of the events embraced in each vista to say, **THEY ARE, AND THEY ARE NOT THE SAME**; and thus does Scripture treat them. Hence the Baptist is called **Elias** and not **Elias**.¹

Of this constant commingling of types and anti-types, treating each vista as one, however numerous the objects in it, and glancing to and fro, the reader may find further proof by referring to the texts enumerated below.² They are only a small portion of what might be given; but as we purpose showing, in a separate work and chart, that the prophecies run in continuous and ever expanding streams, from the first of Genesis to the last of Revelation, further mention here becomes unnecessary.

holy ointment which flowed from Aaron's head, down to the skirts of his garments (Exod. xxx., and Ps. cxxxiii.), typified the spiritual unction which flows from the head of our Great High Priest, through all the members of his mystical body. It is this unction which Mr Elliott so ably traces as flowing in the two apostolic streams of witnesses. Here, then, as elsewhere, we see the law of unbroken progression.

¹ Our Lord says, "Abram saw my Day, and was glad."—Jo. viii. 56. Abram saw it only in type.

² Isaiah ix. 5, 6; xi. 5, 6; xxii. 5, 20, 22; xxiii. 17; xxiv.; xxv. 7; xxvii.; xxviii. 5, 16, 22; and chapters xxxiii., xxxiv., xxxv., xl., li., lii., liiii., lxvi.; Jeremiah iv.; xxiv. 29-38; xxix.; and chapters xxx., xxxi., xxxiii., xlv., xlviii.; Ezekiel vii., xxxii., xxxv., xxxvi.; and, we may add, nearly the entire Psalms, with all the prophetic and typical portions of Holy Writ. Both Vitranga and Bishop Newton allow that the 19th of Isaiah is only partially fulfilled. The long vista is obvious here, as throughout Scripture. On this chapter, both Lowth and Bishop Chandler remark, that "it is common in prophetic style to speak of future times in the language and according to the ideas of the present."

Prophecy is constantly Re-enacted in History.

18. God gives us prophecy once in words, many times in history ; and it is this constant renewal or repetition of prophecy by signs throughout history, that makes the former what God has declared it, "a sure light." In other words, prophecy has reiterated accomplishments, each and every accomplishment being a renewal, by signs, of the prophecy. Hence our Lord's injunction to mark well those signs.

As man reads the Apocalypse, limiting it to one event and one fulfilment, it is not a "sure light." No two are agreed as to the event in which it is fulfilled, and God's "sure light" is extinguished by dense mists of doubt, controversy, and jangling.

The biform nature of prophetic language might alone assure us that such limitation is erroneous. It is alike literal and symbolic ; and besides, its prophetic burden has manifold applications to the church and world, as well as to every member thereof. This constant re-enacting of prophecy explains whence the vast number of remarkable historical parallels¹ with which history is replete. God is in them re-enacting prophecy, and by a striking reiteration of events inviting man to study his past dealings, that he may be prepared for those fearful ones yet in the future. In these parallels, then, or reiteration of events, we have farther proof that history, like Scripture, is cyclical, and that God's teaching is line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little.

¹ See Appendix E. on Historical Parallels. Several striking instances are given.

History and prophecy are in perfect keeping,—the reiteration that pervades the one, equally pervades the other. “The moral and retributive cycles of history are constantly recurring.” “The book of God’s word is placed in accordance with the book of his providence. Inspiration gives the grand outline of God’s purposes, and events disclose the precise how and when these purposes are to be carried into effect. Viewed thus, history and Holy Writ shed a mutual light upon each other.”¹ Dr Cumming, in his able work, “God in History,” bears ample testimony to this truth. He is a follower of Elliott, and, consequently, an unconscious witness to our scheme. “All history,” he says, “is the development of Christianity; all its chapters find their coherency, and harmony, and issue in Christ.” “God in providential history thus kindles lights which conduct men to God in his own Word.” “God is in history forgiving, neutralizing, and overruling, and soon about to come forth to extirpate evil.” “The intellectual, the natural, and the moral world are three consecutive spheres in God’s world.” “God’s sure word of prophecy is the grand fluxion, of which the history of all nations is the fluent.” “Prophecy is history undeveloped, and history is prophecy in full manifestation; and it is in the light struck out by the transition of the one into the other, that we see God clearly.” “Prophecy is every instant rushing into history. History is but the fruit and flower of prophecy, and all men, kings, statesmen, and priests, are unconsciously watering and fostering it.” Let

¹ Douglas on the Structure of Prophecy.

us take one example:—France is at this moment trying to build up a new government, and to set up a new prince.¹ During the last sixty-three years this nation has been doing little else; in that short period she has had about twenty-five different constitutions, or changes of government, and though powerful in all else, she never has succeeded in attaining the object of her wishes, or even peace and quiet. There is but one path, thereto—repentance. But, alas! even this door is shut to her. An infallible church cannot repent. Repentance is only for the fallible! “She has sown the wind, and she must reap the whirlwind.”² During the last 200 years, supreme authority in France has not once passed from father to son! One form of government succeeds another, like wave upon wave; one prince or ruler is set up merely to make way for another; the nation owns no power save the “power of the sword,” and knows no rest, save the brief lulls that forebode the coming tempest.

¹ The following extract, kindly sent us by a friend, precisely describes our view of the structure of history. The structure of history and of prophecy are in fact one and the same. It is the sole allusion to the matter in the volume quoted, nor have we found any elsewhere:—“The current of events, arranged under Providential directions, were ordered so that one stratum of history pictured a subsequent stratum, one course of events formed the types which answer to their antitypes in a subsequent course, and as all types are used only in subservience to the great design of shadowing forth the Divine Antitype—the Son of God, the Saviour of man—so these typical events have all their antitypes in circumstances connected in one way or another with the consummation of his glory.”—Rev. R. C. Dallas. Lent Lectures, 1847.

² Hos. viii. 7.

Such is history! What says prophecy? "The wicked are like a troubled sea, that cannot rest." "For the transgression of a land, many are the princes thereof;" and, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn, till He comes whose right it is." We have, then, in Holy Writ a key to every event passing around and within us. Nor is prophecy God's only Apocalypse; history is another. Not written, it is true, in Patmos, but all ordered and guided by the same Voice and Hand that spake and wrote there! Prophecy is not limited to the few words of prophecy. Those words are re-enacted in every page of history; and therefore every page of history makes us cognizant of God's designs, and furnishes a key to the portals of futurity. The first seal does not teach us in words only that truth "conquering, shall conquer." Those words are proved, illustrated, and re-enacted again and again in our own daily and hourly experience, and throughout the annals of the universe: in the going forth of hosts to carnage, and in the still small voice that bloweth where it lists, and triumphs¹ where it wills.

Process by which
our Scheme was
Evolved.

19. While our system supplies that vast desideratum—the harmony of all conflicting schemes—it was not drawn

¹ We see no reason for excluding these hourly triumphs from the first seal, and limiting it to Trajan's wars, as one commentator does, or to Constantine's, as another does. These, though more visible to the carnal eye, are, in reality, the minor triumphs of the vista. These man may effect; those God alone can effect.

up with any such view. Our sole object in commencing, was to make a handbook of the Apocalypse, wherein each verse should have its separate note of explanation. We had, too, but one rule, and that was, first to ascertain from Scripture, and Scripture alone, the meaning and scope of each chapter and passage, and then, and then only, to consult the writings of man. In the course of our work, we referred only to Mr Elliott's valuable *Horæ Apocalypticæ*, and Dr Cumming's *Apocalyptic Sketches*, which is merely the *Horæ* popularized. These writers belong to the third or Protestant school; and a glance at Mr Elliott's chart will show that he limits every vision to certain fragments of Pagan and Papal history, all of which he arranges chronologically in his chart.¹ We had, therefore, no human model on which to frame our scheme, and assuredly, when we sat down to write, we had none of our own;² nor until we had reached the close of the Apocalypse did we know what solution of the seals we were to follow, for they are only intelligible in the light of the seven vials. We have, therefore, not moulded Scripture to our scheme, as commen-

¹ His seals are exhibited in Gen. Rem. ch. vi.

² Works in any degree likely to bear us out were left for *final* perusal, with a view to secure confirmation, where, otherwise, we should only have had plagiarism. Believing that Futurist writings would throw light on the close of our prophetic streams, we avoided all reference to them until our work was complete. In this we were greatly disappointed. They have rejected all the types of the Last Day; how, therefore, can they judge of the characters and features of the antitype? Theirs is the conduct of the man, who, having a splendid prospect to unfold from some lofty pinnacle, only to be reached by

tators are so often charged with doing, but moulded our scheme to Scripture. We avoided as much as possible consulting human writings, until our chart and text were complete; and Mr Elliott's Appendix,¹ wherein the different systems of interpretation are recorded, was among the last things read by us. In these remarks, the superficial will see nothing but egotism; but with the mind habituated to accurate induction, and anxious to know how any truth has been arrived at, they will have due weight. We shall, therefore, occasionally² state in the body of our work the process by which any truth evolved itself. It becomes the more necessary to do so, as we find writers, when anxious to overthrow a counter view of any vision, that they may set up their own on its ruins, tracing that view to Mede or its first propounder, disposing of his arguments, and then assuming all disposed of!—a compendious but somewhat unfair way of discomfiting many foes, as it is far easier to arrive at truth from the luminous pages of Holy Writ, than from the voluminous pages of man.

Proof of our Scheme from Authors who yet follow Another. 20. We now propose to adduce some proof of our position, that the prophetic visions are far-ranging vistas, from the writings of men; giving first a few instances from those who, following other systems,

a ladder, should begin by knocking every step, save the last, from out that ladder, and then say, "Now, my friends, mount and see."

To volume iv. of *Horæ Apocalypticæ*.

¹ See notes Apocalypse x. 2, and Intro. viii. 8.

yet occasionally bear unconscious testimony to the truth of our own.

Of the parallel histories of 1260 years, Dr Cumming observes, "The Spirit traces one from its commencement to its close; it then goes backward, and begins at the second, and traces it to its close."¹ All writers, we believe, admit this; as well as that the words king, star, beast, witnesses, &c., imply a line or stream thereof. Mr Elliott says, "An individual depicted in symbol means, every where, I believe, many, either collectively or in succession."² But if one word, and each individual person, thus denotes a stream or progressive series thereof,—and this is one of the few undisputed points in prophecy,—much more surely do the many-worded visions of the Apocalypse denote a stream or progressive series of events. The first position these eminent writers fully admit; the second they disallow, inconsistently, we think, because with God there is no variableness neither shadow of turning; and progression is the law alike of nature, history, and Scripture. This universal law, then, *all writers* on prophecy admit where unavoidable, but wholly overlook in the prophetic visions, because the mischievous necessities of arranging them in chronological order, according to man's device, blinds them to God's.

The same Truth
arrived at by Dif-
ferent Processes of
Induction.

21. The works which we now quote fell into our hands *after the completion* of our chart and text. We note this

¹ Apocalyptic Sketches, i. 217.

² Horæ Apocalypticæ, iii. 11.

because, when different and independent minds arrive by different processes of induction at the same conclusion, the probabilities of the truth of that conclusion are greatly strengthened. The eminent Dr Keith has lately published a work entitled "The Harmony of Prophecy." Its object, as stated by himself, is to "illustrate the convergence of prophecy towards the consummation." Our position is precisely the same, as the object of our entire work is to prove that all prophecy runs in unbroken streams from Genesis to the consummation. Dr Keith's work is so replete with the weightiest evidence, that one has only to peruse it to be convinced. We say "weightiest evidence," because he uses no human arguments, but bases every thing upon the words of Him who "cannot lie, and will not mock." If, then, our readers deem the Scriptural proof, which we have given of our position, meagre or insufficient, they have only to turn to Dr Keith's Harmony, and they will there find a sort of Cruden's Concordance to our scheme, sufficient, we think, to satisfy every open mind.

Dr Keith draws very few inferences ; but such as he does draw are, as might be expected from the vast accumulation of Scriptural evidence, weighty and important. We therefore quote three :—

"THE END OF THE MATTER is the same in the song of Moses, the prayers of David, the visions of Daniel, the prophecies of Isaiah, the revelation of Jesus Christ, and the testimony of all the prophets since the world began, as God spake by their mouth of the restitution of all things."—176.

"These Psalms, yet sung in hope, as in faith and praise, mani-

festly point to the day for which believers look, when all things shall be restored, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of the Lord." "The judgment here written is universal. It is not limited to any single city, or country, or nation, as holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, laid on each by name its burden. **THE EARTH, THE WORLD, THE WICKED OF THE EARTH, ALL NATIONS, have their burden here.**"—214.

This bears out our view of the universality of prophecy, as exhibited throughout our work. Dr Keith draws his inference from the Psalms; we draw ours from the Apocalypse. This makes the agreement all the more striking. Revelation is but the consummation of the Psalms, and of all Scripture.

"This truth, 'He cometh,' reaches from the first promise, that the Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head, to the last word of Revelation."

"It will thus be no less obvious to those who hear the words of this prophecy, that the sixth seal and seventh trumpet embrace judgments as well as blessings." "And that all the other visions in like manner are preceded or intermingled with judgments of God as universal in their range; which, as the following pages will amply show, are uniformly in Scripture the heralds of the kingdom of God and of his Christ; the restitution of all things spoken of alike by the apostles and all the prophets since the world began."—38.

It is with no little thankfulness that we find so eminent and long known an expounder of prophecy bearing such ample testimony to the truth of our position.

Douglas's
"Structure of
Prophecy." 22. We must now direct attention to another short but valuable "Treatise, containing the substance of Five Lectures on the Structure of Prophecy." What Luther said of Wessel we must say of Douglas—"Had I read Wessel's works before, my opponents would have

said, Luther has borrowed his ideas from Wessel. This greatly encourages and comforts me. I am no longer in doubt that my teaching is true, he agrees with me so perfectly in his feelings, in his views, and even in his expressions." Not only do our views, feelings, and expressions agree with those of Mr Douglas; but the very simile of a mountain-chain with intervening valleys, which we had chosen to illustrate our position, is that used by him. His arguments are all drawn from Scripture, and set forth with ability, learning, and eloquence. It is not a little remarkable that—at the very moment that the "sure light" of prophecy is flickering in its socket, amid the fetid fumes and mists of human doubt and controversy, and the press loudly declaring that "no man will now dare to predict what to-morrow may bring forth"—three persons, acting *quite independently*¹ of each other, should be found advocating a scheme which must eventually dissipate doubt, terminate controversy, and make every page of history unfold a key to the future. This will be a mighty triumph over the "powers of darkness," and that we shall triumph, if truth be with us, the first seal testifies; for it says, "Truth conquering, shall conquer." The difference in the three works is this :—Dr Keith proves "the convergence of *all* prophecy to the consummation;" Mr Douglas maintains the reiterated accomplishments of prophecy during that convergence; while we apply with full detail this structure of prophecy to

¹ This the dates and remarks in the three works will show.

the Apocalypse. They deal with prophecy generally; we with Revelation in particular. There is, therefore, much in our work that is not in theirs, though on the vital point, the general structure of prophecy, we seem wellnigh agreed. In so vital a cause as that of truth, Mr Douglas will, we feel sure, pardon the following somewhat copious extracts:—

“It is the neglect of prophecy which gives rise to the chief heresies concerning prophecy.” “If any truth be disregarded, some exaggerated form of error comes to supply its place. We are neither to add to the Word of God nor to diminish aught from it. The neglect of prophecy eventually does both, since it consigns a large and most important portion to rest in silence and darkness.”

“The Word of God is all prophetic; it is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” “Each prophecy has not only its own prophetic import, but unites its current to the great stream of prophecy; yields its own light, be it greater or less, but receives its chief illumination from the constellation of predictions with which it is associated. It is not to be placed apart, but blended and harmonized with all the predictions that have preceded it, and are to follow. Each prophecy is thus connected with all prophecy, and all prophecy with the general tenor of the Scriptures.” “Prophecy is found not reserving its illuminations and its consolations for any particular period of the world’s history alone, but commencing, like the morning star, to shine on the path of the first man, and growing brighter and brighter, till it issues in the full light of perfect day.”

“One great source of difficulty in the interpretation of prophecy is the variance between the narrowness of man’s mind and the infinite mind of God.” “God is spreading before the mind the sublime visions of futurity, while man is disputing about the precise date, when, perhaps, some imagination of his own will assume ‘a local habitation and a name’ in the registry of the world’s annals.”

“In the Bible we have God immediately present with us, unfolding his vast designs from eternity to eternity. In the commentaries we have too often vain jangling and disputes.” Hence the present unpopularity of prophecy.

“We may propound, perhaps, as a safe rule, that the interpreters of prophecy are most generally right where they agree, and oftenest wrong when they differ from each other.”¹

¹ Our scheme reconciles all differences.

"Prophecies receive, as Bacon observes, some peculiar fulness of accomplishment in some one age or place, but have besides, many 'springing and germinant accomplishments;' and thus events which it would be erroneous to consider as the chief objects of the prophecy, might yet be brought forward as the repeated fulfilment of the same Divine plan."

"As Lowth observes, it is in prophecy as in a picture, we have the foreground, the middle distance, and the remote horizon; and the prophetic picture extends in succession from the immediate objects which surround us till it blends with the remotest scenes of a far distant futurity. These three graduated fulfilments of prophecy he marks in many of the predictions of Isaiah."

"Thus every single prophecy flows in an enlarging stream towards its own accomplishment, and joins the mighty river of life, which is hastening onwards to the ocean of eternity."

"The interval when the prophetic voice was silent before the coming of Christ, separates ancient prophecy from its renewal under the new dispensation. Still though there is an interval of time, there is no change in the spirit and genius of prophecy, and the predictions of the Old and New Testament fit in together, continue the same strains, and employ the same imagery."

"The true way to understand the map of prophecy is to trace the stream from its fountain."¹

"Some have given it as their great argument for interpreting the New Testament prophecies strictly according to the letter, that all were agreed that of Old Testament prophecies had without exception a literal accomplishment, and a literal accomplishment only. Interpreted in this mode, the first prophecy speaks of the serpent; therefore the killing of serpents is the literal fulfilment of the prophecy. But the merely literal accomplishment of prophecy is in fact but a repetition of the prophecy; it is a renewed prophecy by signs instead of words, of that which is afterwards to take place. The warfare which the human race have carried on, and successfully, with the serpent brood, has been merely a repetition by emblems of the predicted warfare which the spiritual seed have been carrying on against the spiritual 'old serpent, which is the devil,' which prediction received its high accomplishment when Christ at his crucifixion and resurrection triumphed over sin and Satan; and when the conqueror bruised Satan's head, after the tempter had bruised the victor's heel. And the same prediction will receive its final accomplishment when Christ, at the last day, shall consign the Old Serpent and original enemy of our race to everlasting chains. We have in this one prophecy a sample of all prophecy; it stretches from the

¹ We had, before seeing this, designed a chart and small work showing that all prophecy runs continuously from Genesis to Revelation.

beginning to the end of time; it includes the literal fulfilment, but does not rest in it; makes even the literal fulfilment a renewed and outstanding prophecy and pledge that the whole shall be fulfilled in the largest sense, when the fulness of time is come."

Of the prophecy relating to the sons of Noah, the eloquent writer adds :—

"In this short prediction, we have a stream of time, and course of history, flowing down to the present moment, and stretching forward to a point in futurity not yet fully ascertained."

"Both the words of Job and the restored life and prosperity of Job, loudly proclaim that God watches over the dust of his servants, and will restore them to life in his presence, and to joy for evermore."

"Many of the prophecies of Balaam receive their first and literal fulfilment in David, but the expectations of the East were never fulfilled in David, as they never ceased to look for the Messiah."

"David rises as the image of the expected star." "In his inspired odes David is at once the type of the Saviour and of the believer."

"Many passages" (in Proverbs) "are evidently prophetic of Him 'who spake as never man spake;' and the connection is firmly established between the Eternal Wisdom in Proverbs and the Logos of St John."

"Other prophets have been rapt into future times. Isaiah appears wholly to live in them." "While celebrating the deliverance from Sennacherib and the destruction of Nineveh itself, he views it only as a passing storm." "The permanent and final ruin of his country he perceives at once to be from Babylon. And springing out of the ruins of the first Babylon, he perceives a second and more spiritual tyranny, that shall rivet the thralldom of the spiritual Israel in the latter days." "How vast is the mind of prophecy, that after so many ages and so many accomplishments, so many great events are still behind, to make up the completeness of these ancient predictions."—59.

"The second accomplishment of these prophecies" (of the return of the children of captivity), "a figurative and spiritual accomplishment took place, when John the Baptist heralded the Divine Saviour," "preaching repentance, which brought the humbled sinner from the thralldom of evil into the liberty of the children of God." "But a third accomplishment yet remains, when a new influence shall descend from on high, when there shall be a universal pentecost, and a general moral resurrection." "These are three great fulfilments of the predicted return of the children of the captivity, and minor ones might be added; such, for example, as the return of the Protestants from the thral-

dom of the spiritual Babylon ; but enough is seen, even from the consideration of these three graduated steps of the successive accomplishment of prophecy and its perpetual enlargement, as of a river that is growing broader and broader as it approaches the ocean."

"Thus in Jeremiah as in all other prophecies, there are reduplicated accomplishments both of the fall of Babylon and of the restoration of Israel."—68.

Of the views of the sixth seal, the learned writer says, they have been such that "the whole Apocalyptic edifice has seemed one Babel of confusion. The double fulfilment of prophecy solves every difficulty, and reconciles opposing opinions."

"Prophecy is more full than history, as Porphyry the infidel has with no friendly spirit remarked. There are incidents contained in Daniel which have been overlooked in profane story or probably lost. And it is a remarkable circumstance that the infidel here proves the best commentator. St Jerome and others confirm this by following in the steps of Porphyry." "It is to be regretted that Christians break off from Porphyry when they come to the period of Antiochus Epiphanes ; and that not owing to any fault of Porphyry, but to Christian writers not understanding the general structure of prophecy. Porphyry interprets of Antiochus Epiphanes, what the Christians apply to Antichrist. The double interpretation of prophecy reconciles both."

"In regard to the 'abomination of desolation,' we have another remarkable instance of the reiterated fulfilment of prophecy. It was first accomplished when Antiochus introduced his idols into Jerusalem ; then when Cestius brought the Roman ensigns to the gates ; and lastly when the Mahommedan ensigns, not like the former two simply idolatrous, but at once anti-idolatrous and anti-Christian, took possession of the holy city that it might be trodden down of the Gentiles for 1260 years. We have also, in this prophecy, a striking example how predictions which begin with the first and figurative coming to judgment may include a line of vision extending to other preliminary judgments, and concluding with the final judgment."

"The literal Gog and Magog are to perish literally upon the mountains of Israel previous to the commencement of the millennium ; and at its close a figurative Gog and Magog shall be raised up for a separate fulfilment of the prophecy."

The learned author does not further apply his

scheme to Revelation, hence here our agreement ends. The difference between Mr Douglas' views and our own—if any there be—lies in this: he advocates a reiterated fulfilment, double or triple as the case may be, or, as Lowth expresses it, "three graduated fulfilments of prophecy." We advocate, in addition thereto,¹ a CONTINUOUS AND PROGRESSIVE fulfilment; so that no day passes, the events of which do not fall into their respective prophetic vistas.

Brief Outline of
our View of the
Apocalypse. First
Seal, the Golden
Eras of the World.

23. Proceeding, then, on these somewhat novel, but as we believe Scriptural principles, we conceive that the vista of the first seal glances through the golden mist of years down to the gates of glory: contains all the triumphs of truth, great and small, and connects by one continuous chain, the gospel day of small things, with that glorious morn wherein the Sun of Righteousness shall irradiate with his own holy light a world lying in wickedness. The Spirit of Truth pervades this golden vista, hence all is victory, triumph, and a crown: while no non-kindred event finds place here, to mar this pellucid stream where God is all in all.

But we must ask our readers to suspend their judgment even on this seal, until furnished with full details; while, for the present, we omit all reference to the remaining seals, because it is necessary that

¹ Although Mr Douglas does not mention the continuity of prophecy in his brief treatise, we believe he will admit it, even should he not already hold it.

when made public, they be accompanied with full proof, and this can only be given in our exposition.

The church has possessed these seals wellnigh two thousand years, no portion of holy writ has been so much canvassed, and they are still confessedly unsolved. The thoughtful never have, and never can believe that they are fulfilled, as we are told, in Trajan, Rome's Pretorian guards, Caracalla, Diocletian, and Constantine.¹

The solution we have to offer, especially of the second, third, and fourth seals, has never before been broached. If true, may it have free course; if false, we shall be the first to hail its overthrow.

It appears true because it opens the Apocalypse—because before it difficulties, hitherto insurmountable, disappear, while under it St John's Revelation is found to coincide with that of Moses, for the early church had the Apocalypse of Patmos in shadow. One or two extracts from the body of our work may suffice to prove this:—

“It was only when our scheme and chart were complete, and during the final revision of the ninth chapter, that we observed, that according to our best commentators, the plagues of the Apocalypse are twenty or twenty-one in number; while, on our system, they are only ten. We thereon turned to the plagues of Egypt, doubtful of their number, and found they were ten also. We note this to show that this agreement was *wholly* unexpected on our part, and seeing the perfect unity² of Scripture from first to last, we think the coincidence corroborates our view.

“We then proceeded to compare the plagues of Moses with those of St John, when we found the following parities. And let the reader observe that there is no transposition of order with a view to obtain agreement: we give the Egyptian plagues

¹ Apo. vi. Gen. Remark.

² Intro. i. 4-6.

in the exact order of Exodus, and St John's plagues in the exact order of the Apocalypse. We have likewise endeavoured in the comparison not even to alter the language, and quote almost verbatim from Moses, and from our own chart and scheme."

EGYPTIAN PLAGUES.

1. "And there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt."—Exod. vii. 21.

2. Aaron stretched forth his hand, over the waters of Egypt, and frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt."—Exod. viii. 6.

3. "The dust of the earth became lice in man and beast throughout the land of Egypt."—Exod. viii. 17.

No exemption specified in favour of Israel from these plagues.

4. "Swarms of flies," or, as in margin, "a mixture of noisome beasts;" "the land was corrupted."—Exod. viii. 21-24. Israel exempt.

5. "Grievous murrain," and "ALL the cattle of Egypt died."—Exod. ix. 9.

6. "Ashes from the furnace sprinkled towards heaven" became "a boil breaking forth upon man and beast."—Exod. ix. 10.

7. "I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people."

"I will smite thee with pestilence, and thou shalt be cut off from the earth." And "the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along the ground."—Exod. ix. 14-23. Thus was the sun or monarch of Egypt darkened, and his people scorched with fire.

8. "Behold to-morrow I will bring locusts into thy coasts, and they shall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth."—Exod. x. 3-19.

"The locusts were cast into the Red Sea," that is, were engulfed.

9. "There was a thick darkness in

APOCALYPTIC PLAGUES.¹

1. Bloody eras of the world.

2. The woman that sitteth upon many waters, pollutes them with her spawn. Whence unclean spirits, like frogs, arise and cover the land.

3. The dust and scum of the earth, like unclean vermin, crawl throughout the land.

No exemption specified in favour of the Church from these plagues.

4. A noisome and corrupting sore fell on men. Church exempt.

5. "EVERY living soul died in the sea."

6. "Fire from of the altar is cast unto the earth, and immediately the plagues break out. The people became wormwood, and died of the bitterness."

7. All the Apocalyptic plagues here unite and deepen in intensity.

"The sun was darkened, and the day shone not." "And power was given to scorch men with fire: and men were scorched with great heat."

8. "And there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and air were darkened." "And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth." His "kingdom was full of darkness." The locusts are engulfed.

9. "The day of the Lamb's wrath,"

¹ For a full understanding of the Apocalyptic plagues, the reader must, of course, go to the body of our work.

all the land of Egypt three days."—Exod. x. 21-29.

"But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings."

10. "Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt, afterwards he will let you go hence." "And all the first-born in the land shall die."—Exod. xi. 1.; xii. 30.

11. First enemy of the church engulfed in the abyss.

called by all the prophets a day of darkness, when "all faces shall gather blackness." "For the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand: a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness."—Joel ii. 2. "The day of the Lord is darkness." "Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness and not light—even very dark."—Amos v. 18, 20.

"And there was the hiding-place of his power." "My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings and in quiet resting-places." "Then look ye up, for your redemption draweth nigh."

10. "It is done." "The kingdoms of this world are become our Lord's. And the time is come to destroy all them that destroy the earth."

11. Last enemy of the church engulfed in the abyss.

Now, here is a more striking identity between type and anti-type than is usually found in Scripture. For instance, Eve flowing from the first Adam's wounded side, is not so obvious a type of the church flowing from the wounded side of the Second Adam; or Ruth, of the Gentile church; or Boaz, Samson, and many others, of our Lord; or the building of Solomon's¹ temple, of that temple made without hands, eternal in the heavens. In type and antitype, we must not, as so many do, look for perfect resemblance—the great apostle tells us not to expect this.² The nature of prophecy, which is ever culminating, expanding, and amplifying, forbids us to expect it. The plagues of Egypt are but the Apocalypse in miniature.³

Here, then, is a marked agreement between Exodus and Revelation—not in number, order, and charac-

¹ Notes, iii. 12. Intro., x. 9.

² Heb. x. 1.

³ Intro., i. 4.

ter only, but in letter and in spirit—an agreement never before attained by any other Apocalyptic scheme, and all the more striking, because neither sought for nor aimed at. We trust we are not presumptuous in saying that God's own Word herein testifies¹ to the truth of our view and arrangement of the Apocalypse.

We give one other extract from the body of our work, in the form of a contrasted statement:—

¹ On seeing this agreement, a divine remarked, "You may stake the truth of your scheme on that." Many consider the plagues of Egypt a mere historic narrative. History they undoubtedly are; but, like all history, they are typical: for God calls them "my signs," (Exod. x. 1.) Their *exact* antitypes never have, we believe, been pointed out, because they lay hid in the Apocalypse. In its light alone are they intelligible, and the Egyptian and Apocalyptic plagues mutually illumine each other.

THE WORK OF TRUTH, AS SET FORTH IN GENESIS.

| SILENCE. | EARTH. | SEAS. | RIVERS. | FIRMAMENT. | FATHER OF THE TRUE CHURCH. | MOTHER OF THE TRUE CHURCH. |
|--|---|---|--|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Darkness and the silence of night brooded over nature. | God went forth and "divided the light from the darkness;" in other words, formed the world. | God "divided the waters from the waters," i. e., made the seas. | God said, "let the waters be gathered together, to one place," i. e., by the rivers. | God forms and orders the firmament. | God makes his own image, man, and gives him universal dominion in the earth, church and world. | With Eve his bride, type of the true church invisible and universal. With her biform offspring or executive, prophets and teachers, ecclesiastical and lay. |
| Gen. i. 2. | i. 4. | i. 6. | i. 9. | i. 14-18. | THE PARENTS OF CHRIST'S TRUE CATHOLIC CHURCH. | |

THE COUNTER WORK OF ERROR, AS SET FORTH IN THE TRUMPETS.

| SILENCE. | EARTH. | SEAS. | RIVERS. | FIRMAMENT. | FATHER OF THE FALSE CHURCH. | MOTHER OF THE FALSE CHURCH. |
|---|---|---|--|--|---|--|
| Silence before Error is let loose on his desolating, but God's retributive mission. | Error desolates the earth in his war with all God's works. God punishes man thereby, and Satan's wrath to praise him. | Error renews his war, but now on the sea. | Error renews his war. The rivers are now the object of his attack. | Error renews his war. God's firmament is now the object of his impious attack. | Error sets up his counter image, or Antichrist: aiming at counter Catholicism—the would-be lord and head of the church and world. | With his counter bride, "The mother of harlots." Type of the universal apostate church. With her biform offspring or executive, false prophets and false teachers, ecclesiastical and lay. |
| Apo. viii. | I. Trumpet. | II. Trumpet. | III. Trumpet. | IV. Trumpet. | <p>THE PARENTS OF ERROR'S COUNTER CATHOLIC CHURCH.</p> <p>But while two great heresies—the Eastern and Western Antichrists—are conspicuous here, this joint stream embraces every kindred heresy. Hence here are Britain's Formalism, Antinomianism, Socialism, Mormonism, and every error great and small. All will be found in the Apocalypse.</p> <p>V. Trumpet.</p> <p>VI. Trumpet.</p> | |

These two examples may suffice. In the same way we trace the seals and vials and the entire Apocalypse to early Scripture.

But to resume:—The seals contain, we believe, the entire outline of the Apocalypse, and to the filling in thereof, all the subsequent chapters are devoted: and as Revelation expounds Genesis, so do the vials the seals.

Under the seventh seal, (*vide* Chart), the seven trumpets are seen flowing in continuous streams, down to the grand terminus of all prophecy; giving us, like the entire Apocalypse, a vast amount of secular and ecclesiastical history, in a few words,—history primarily of the Roman empire, Pagan and Papal,—ultimately, of the world.—So with the vials.

The fifth and sixth trumpets are commonly understood to depict the Saracens and Turks. If we are right, the Spirit of Error assumes in them a new . . . form—Papal, Saracenic, and Turkish—for his last deadly strife with truth during the 1260 years' war.

For the details of this war, which extends over a reiterated period of 1260 years and days, we must turn to "The Little Book," the writing without the scroll. There, and in chapters x. to xiv. inclusive, full particulars are given.

We stand alone, we believe, in placing these five chapters outside the scroll. But to those conversant with such Eastern documents, our chart and notes¹ will, we think, contain evidence of our correctness. And, as another instance of unintentional agreement

¹ Apo. x. 2, Notes.

we may mention, that we had constructed our chart, and written all our observations thereon, when it occurred to us, that if the chart be correct, the streams within and without ought to correspond in number. We counted, and found that the numbers did exactly correspond; and this not through two pages only, but through four.

So essential¹ is this correspondence to an accurate Eastern scroll, that, had we not found it to exist, we must have altered our arrangement until attained. As it was, no change was necessary.

Our solution of the falling star of the third trumpet as the is, we believe, entirely new. We differ also from Elliott and other eminent expositors in the fallen star of the fifth trumpet. In our view he is² We differ also from the said writers in making the vials commence, though with a retrospective glance, about the era of the Reformation, instead of the French Revolution: and in applying the trumpets primarily to both Eastern and Western empires, Pagan and Papal, ultimately to the world. Lastly, we consider that there is just as much of the first seal and of every subsequent vista unfulfilled, as of the seventh vial: "for the days are at hand and the effect of EVERY vision."

And if we are right in our belief, that prophecy is literal in its primary and ultimate accomplishments,

¹ For full explanation the reader must refer to Apocalypse x., and to the Chart.

² The reader must pardon these temporary erasures. It is essential that new solutions be accompanied by proof.

and symbolic in all intermediate ones,¹ though with a sprinkling of the literal even in them, owing to the multitude of types and shadows; another very important, and, so far as we know, novel truth has been attained, which must greatly help to remove the obscurity of prophecy. For instance, in Isaiah's and David's final predictions of our Lord's sufferings, the language is plain narrative. The Holy Spirit designed no intermediate accomplishment; therefore symbols, whose main object is to suit intermediate and partial fulfilments, are uncalled for, and accordingly not one is used. "They pierced my hands and my feet. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Here is no symbol, and why, but because the prophet was depicting the ultimate object in his vista, and that alone, without reference to any intermediate shadow. Take another example: our Lord prophesied to his twelve disciples of his own sufferings and death, which were to take place **ONCE AND FOR ALL**. No intermediate shadow was used, there was no double sense, hence there is not a single symbol from first to last in the prophecy. The words are, "The Son of man shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on; and they shall scourge him

¹ If this be true, the long standing dispute as to whether we are to read prophecy figuratively or literally, must, in a great measure, cease; and the trite but false argument, that if one part of a vision be literal, all must be so—one part figurative, all must be so, falls to the ground.

and put him to death: and the third day he shall arise again.”¹ But so slow is man to understand all the things that are written by the prophets, and so closed the minds of even God’s own children, to the plainest truths conveyed in the plainest language, that it is added, “And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.” But that God’s own Word states this astounding fact, man could not credit it! Take, too, the equally clear prophecy of our Lord’s second advent, “This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”² Here no intermediate accomplishment is referred to, and consequently no symbol is used. The sixth seal is a further proof of our position. So important is its vista, that six verses are devoted to it, one or two only to the other seals. The language of its first three verses are in the highest degree symbolic, because they have many intermediate accomplishments: but then, leaving the shadows, the prophet glances to the end of his vista, and depicts, in the next three verses, that Day of the Lamb’s wrath, which will be fulfilled once and for all: and the language used is simple narrative. “The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free-man, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains: and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sit-

¹ Luke xviii. 32.

² Acts i. 11.

teth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come: and who shall be able to stand?" Now, there is not one symbol here,—it is as literal a narrative as that used by our Lord to the twelve: yet the saying is hid, writers cannot agree as to its meaning, and like the twelve understand it not! One declares that these plain words depict the era of Constantine, another the era of the French Revolution! Scripture, says the prophet, speaks of "THE DAY OF THE LAMB'S WRATH," and he does so in the very terms used THROUGHOUT Holy Writ of that day.¹ Which party will the reader credit?—commentators who never can agree, or God and the prophets who never disagree? As elsewhere shown, the prophets vary their feelings with the eras they depict: they in fact are wrapt, or live in them. Thus Isaiah does not say, "he shall be," but "he is a man of sorrows." St John says, "The day of his wrath is come." But this entire subject is so important, that we have devoted a separate paper to it.²

We dare not presume to think that we have adequately worked out the scheme here outlined. Weaknesses and imperfections manifold must ever necessarily beset the finite mind in its feeble efforts to understand the Infinite. If we are the honoured instrument of starting but one important truth, or of reawakening the public interest in prophecy—alas! that such a work should remain to be done, and that

¹ App. H., Passages of Scripture referring to the Day of the Lord.

² App. B., On the Language of Nature and of Symbols.

at the eleventh hour—but above all, if we effect a reconciliation of conflicting schemes, or sound, however feebly, the knell of prophetic controversy, we have ample reward.

It is our heart's desire that all readers and expositors of the prophetic Word—ay! and all the church—may yet unite their forces to form one perfect comment answering to the divine text, and be henceforth as diligent in crushing the serpent brood of controversy, as they have hitherto been in fostering it. From paradise lost to paradise regained, it has ever been, and ever will be, the aim of the Spirit of Evil to spread dissension in the camp of Truth.

He cannot annihilate the forces of truth, but he essays continually to weaken them, and aided, for the most part unwittingly, by the weakness, ignorance, and vanity of man, how successfully has he striven! Christ's Church is fissured with schism, while that of Antichrist boasts loudly of unity; and rightly, for error, though multiform, is ever one in spirit, aim, and deed.

The god of this world hates unity, peace, harmony, and love: where they exist, his devices are powerless, and he cannot enter. Disunion, strife, confusion, and enmity are what he seeks and loves, because where they are, his devices flourish and his kingdom strengthens, while truth withers, and its empire shakes. The Adversary well knows¹ the value of that "sure light," prophecy, to the present age—would that men equally knew it!—hence his constant

¹ App. A., On the Spirit of Error and his Tactics.

efforts to dim it with "the smoke from the abyss." And he rarely works without success, for he finds in man's limited powers and pride an ever ready door whereby to enter, wound his victim, and through him the truth. It is but the old stratagem of the arch-enemy, attempting to lead man first to doubt, then to disobedience. And working in and through man, he has covered prophecy with doubt,¹ so that men begin to despair of arriving at truth, and to "despise prophesyings," in open disobedience to the many mandates of the Deity to read, study, and meditate thereon.

Summary. 24. Let the reader fully understand the structure of the first seal. To do so is to understand all the prophetic streams, as well as the entire structure of Scripture, for all Scripture is prophetic. The seals, like the entire Apocalypse, take their rise in Genesis, and have their consummation in the day of the Lord. There we have the seed,—here the full grown and ripe fruit. In the one, we have God's Sabbath rest; in the other, his sabbatism² of rest. In Genesis, truth went forth conquering and to conquer; and it has ever since, as David spake, in its majesty ridden prosperously, because of righteousness and meekness. No day, no hour, no moment flies, in which truth is not conquering and making some inroad into the dominion of error.

¹ In App. A. the reader will find that the parts of the Apocalypse towards the solution of which the least approach has been made, are precisely those which unveil the tactics of "the Adversary."

² Apo. xx. 4. "There remaineth therefore a keeping of a Sabbath (margin) to the people of God."—Heb. iv. 9.

In this vast vista of triumph and victory, all the history of truth finds its place. Here are all the armies of the Lord God of Sabaoth—here all Christ's conquests in and through them. Our Re-formations, whether Constantine's, or Luther's, or Wilberforce's, do not here stand alone. They were but the grand issues of the momentary triumphs of truth over the powers of darkness,—the results of the constant leavening of the whole lump,—the fruit and blossom of the previous continuous conquests, and triumphant march of truth.

Here mark the perfect chronology¹ of Holy Writ; each event as it flies takes its place in its kindred vista, and every hour and moment contributes its quota to the several prophetic streams which are rushing onward to eternity. Hence their continuous amplification, which is so marked a feature in prophecy, and indeed in all God's works. What an exact type of these prophetic streams are the rivers of God! Let the reader study the one, and he will thence understand the other; for God speaks to us in two languages,—that of Holy Writ and of nature:² and the two are ever consistent the one with the other.

At first a small spring, then a gentle rill, then a

¹ How different this from the chronology assigned to the Apocalypse by our best commentators! In utter disregard of God's assertion that he has put all times and seasons in his own hand, they tell us to a year and day when the prophetic visions begin and end! Nay, they do more,—they tell us the rise and close of **ALL THE UNREVEALED** periods of prophecy, while they can give us no such definite information as to the **FEW REVEALED** periods! See Sketch 6, and Mr Elliott's chart.

² App. B., On the Language of Nature and of Symbols

murmuring streamlet, ever swelling and accumulating as it flows, at length an Amazon,¹ with its many continuous tributaries, cutting, submerging, and boiling over its banks, and at its close rushing furiously and confusedly into the abyss, where, to the eye of sense, it is lost for ever ;—so it is with the rivers of prophecy. We find the spring in Genesis ; but each rill widens and deepens as it flows,—all the tributary streams of history daily, hourly, and momentarily discharge their contents into them, until the quiet streamlet begins to roar and boil with its mighty prophetic burden, and at length rushes furiously, and to the eye of sense confusedly, into the sea of eternity, in that great day when earth shall behold “the effect of every vision,” when the warhorses shall swim in blood,² “for every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood ; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire.”³

The popular proverb in Israel is, “The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth.” But God’s reply is, “The days are at hand, and the effect of EVERY vision.”⁴

Rivers, then, are an exact illustration of the streams of prophecy, and thus we find in every work of God a key to his Word. Nature and history are but running commentaries on Holy Writ. The one speaks, the others illustrate, confirm, enforce, and that con-

¹ The Amazon rises in the Andes, runs a course of 5000 miles, receives the contents of more than 300 tributary streams, and loses itself in the Atlantic.

² Apo. xiv. 20.

Isa. ix. 5. See App. H., On Last Day.

⁴ Ezek. xii. 22.

tinuously, its every word. What are our Lord's parables but the doctrine of Scripture clothed in the language of nature and of history? God prophesies, as we have elsewhere shown,¹ not in words only, but in signs, in shadows, in figures, in similitudes, in images, in history, in allegory. PROPHECY EVER SELECTS THE SEEN TO DEPICT THE UNSEEN. This our world is but a figurative picture of the next; and the more earnestly we study God's earthly landscape, the better prepared shall we be for the dazzling refulgence of his heavenly one.

All in the first dispensation was significant of a great coming day; all in the second is significant of a yet coming and far greater day. The one shadowed forth the suffering Messiah; the other shadows forth the triumphant Messiah.

All the rites of the law, we are told,² were but the gospel in signs and shadows, and St Paul did but preach in words what Moses preached in figure.³ The new moons, the Sabbath days, the ordained meats and drinks, holy days, prophets, priests, kings, all the rites of the law, all histories, and all biographies, centered in "the body of Christ."⁴

In a word, the Jewish dispensation was a vast pano-

¹ App. B., On the Language of Nature and of Symbols. For further proof of our position, the reader may consult "The Figurative Language of Scripture," and "The Book of Nature," by Wm. Jones,—works which, while they bear us out, happily only fell into our hands while at press.

² Heb. x. 1.

³ Paul says, "None other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say."—Acts xxvi. 22. Moses did not say these things in words, but in signs.

⁴ Col. ii. 17; Heb. x. 1.

ramic imagery, prophetic of the first advent. The Gentile dispensation is one vast prophetic imagery of the second. The gospel rites are but heaven in figure, and the events of history the last day in type. Not that the first imagery has ceased to teach,—it is more than ever radiant with light; they saw through a glass darkly,—we, face to face. And in like manner, the second coming will so irradiate the gospel dispensation with the latter-day glory, that “we shall see face to face, and know as we are known.”

Just as the early church was hemmed in by God’s universal teaching, and thus forcibly kept in communion with the Coming One, or, as St Paul has it, “shut up unto the faith that should afterwards be revealed,”¹—so are we shut up unto the coming revelation of the Son of Man. “Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him.”²

All in the Patriarchal dispensation tended to keep alive the church’s expectancy of the promised Seed. That failing, the further institutions of the law were added with the same end and aim. But this and God’s every other mode of teaching failed, the Seed came unlooked for and disowned, and why, but that man is slow to understand all that God’s prophets, human, shadowy, and material, have spoken?

But “this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go;”³ and the aim of God’s present dispensation with us is to keep alive our expectancy of that

¹ Gal. iii. 23.

² Apo. i. 7.

³ Acts i. 11.

His greatest because final coming. Hence all our rites and types, all Scripture and all history centre and are fulfilled in Him; and our passover we celebrate "until He come."¹

Under the old dispensation, all were figures of the intermediately Coming One; under the new, all are figures of the finally Coming One. All in ancient history "happened for ensamples unto us, and for our admonition;"² all in modern history has the same aim. The Old Testament, with all its cognate histories, types, rites, acts, events, was but an unbroken portraiture of the day of the Lamb's suffering; the New, with its cognate histories, types, rites, acts, events, is but a continuous imagery³ of the day of the Lamb's wrath, the overthrow of every enemy, and the glory of Christ and of his bride. The one points to Christ's coming as a priest and prophet, a humble and rejected suitor; the other to his coming King of kings and Lord of lords, a conquering and triumphant Bridegroom. He came to fulfil the feast of the passover, and to eat its "bitter herbs;"⁴ He has yet to come to fulfil the feast of Tabernacles, and to eat with the "blessed, the marriage supper of the Lamb."⁵

The first advent took the Church unawares; and so, it is written, shall the second. And why, but

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 26.

² 1 Cor. x. 11.

³ The reader must not for a moment suppose that we here imply any disunion between the imagery of the first and second advents. They unite, become one, and shed a mutual light upon each other. The first imagery glances through the first advent to the second.

⁴ Exod. xii.

⁵ Apo. xix. 9.

because men confounded types and antitypes; in other words, would not discern between summer and the signs of summer? To avoid their error, let us remember that this is the day of shadows,—that the *night* of realities; and, inasmuch as we see the shadows lengthening and deepening, by so much do we know that evening is nigh.

And we have only to observe the excessive accuracy of the fulfilments at the first coming, to judge of the perfect accuracy of all fulfilments in the second. It is a grievous fallacy, an offshoot of that Satanic heresy, which denies the plenary inspiration of Holy Writ, to deem the Apocalypse, or any part of prophecy, merely a divine poem. There is no hyperbole in Scripture; what is writ, shall come to pass to the letter, doubt and deny it whoso list. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but no jot or tittle of prophecy shall, until all be fulfilled. It was prophesied, “not a bone of Him was broken,” and so it was fulfilled; it is prophesied that “heaven and earth fled away, and there was found no place for them,” and so it shall be fulfilled.

In fine, illustration is a law¹ and rule of nature; that rule we have followed in the vista system—every event therein illustrates coming kindred ones. And when we behold the Word of God thus accurately written and reiterated in the familiar characters of nature, and of history, it is evident that the three have one common author, and that that author is God.

But to return to the seals; in them we have an

¹ See App. B., On the Language of Nature and of Symbols.

epitome of all Scripture and of all history. They depict¹

So does Scripture from first to last, and so does history. The seals, then, are a clue to the whole Apocalypse and to all Scripture; hence their vast importance, and the necessity of rightly understanding them. The sole difference between Scripture and history is, that the former is writ by God in the language of heaven in a few words of infinite compass, while the latter is writ by man in the fallen language of earth, in countless words and endless volumes.

Man's arrangement of history is chaotic; but "God is not the author of confusion,"² and he arranges all history in vast streams of kindred events, running from the creation to the re-creation. Hence the infinite brevity and yet infinite compass of Holy Writ. In one small volume, and in a few words, we have the history of many thousand years. The entire outline thereof is often given in one chapter, as in Apocalypse vi., and details supplied again and again, until all is made so plain, that he who runs may read.

Now, as regards the new scheme which we pro-

¹ Let us suppose an angel commissioned by heaven to make a census of creation from the first to the last man. Vast as is the work, he would probably proceed with some such scroll as this.

| LIVING. | | DEAD. | |
|---------|---------|-------|---------|
| Male. | Female. | Male. | Female. |

Under these four heads he would arrange and class all mankind. This may help to illustrate the construction of the first four seals,—abundantly simple, like all God's works, and yet abundantly compendious.

² 1 Cor. xiv. 33.

pound, it is either a great truth, for the revelation of which the praise is due to God, or it is a great error, the reproach of which is due to us. That it is a truth, appears from the facts that our scheme is in perfect keeping with Scripture, with analogy, and with God's usual procedure,—that it restores to prophecy the harmony of which man had bereft it ; while its truth is so apparent—for truth is ever clear—that it was unhesitatingly admitted by the few eminent divines, to whom we explained it with a view to obtain such opinions of our work as might influence the publishers.

Another proof of the accuracy of our scheme lies in the fact, that before it the main difficulties of the Apocalypse give way. Portions and expressions wholly inexplicable on any other view become clear ; and where commentators have, by the necessities of an erroneous system, been forced to warp and even deform the sacred text, the sole difficulty in our system would be, to show how the expression could be otherwise.¹ But the strongest proof of our scheme is perhaps this : When we adjust the several pieces of a wooden map, we know, by the fact of all fitting in and agreeing, that the adjustment is correct. In like manner, on our principle of interpretation, the Apocalypse exactly fits into and agrees with Genesis ; all the seals, trumpets, and vials, tallying in character, order, number, and all else, with the seals and plagues of the Pentateuch. Now, this agreement was wholly

¹ See notes on "them" in fourth seal ; Apocalypse xi. 13, notes. Also the removal of the horse and rider in fourth seal,—a fact never yet explained. Also the "fourth part" in fourth seal, called by Mr Elliott and others "the whole." Many other instances will occur.

unexpected on our part; having deciphered the Apocalypse, we found it existed; we did not aim at it, and were even ignorant of its existence until we had completed our work. Thus, we have the Old Testament bearing witness to our view of Revelation,—a coincident correspondence so strong, as almost to tempt us to exclaim, “If God be for us, who shall be against us?”

Pursuing this scheme throughout the Apocalypse, we find that Revelation is the grand total of all Scripture. Here we have every book, chapter, verse, and word of Holy Writ summed up. Hence the constant recurrence of the holy number seven¹ in this divine book, indicating its totality. Hence, too, the massive bulk of Revelation, which has so long defied the Church’s power of deciphering. The grand total of Scripture is so vast, that it is not easily read. Some say it is in units, some in hundreds, but it is in millions of millions. When we receive an earthly account, we first look to the grand total, and having thereby obtained a general view of the whole matter, we in its light examine the previous details. Now, God has delivered to us a divine and heavenly account, on the due deciphering of which hangs eternal salvation; but man scarcely glances at the grand total; hence he does not adequately understand the previous details, simple and easy as they at first sight appear.

Here mark the evidences of Christianity educed from this view of the Apocalypse. There is a book

¹ See Intro., i.

called the Holy Bible, written at very different and very distant periods of time, and by different and distant writers during a long course of years. It is at length found that the last 22 chapters thereof contain the grand total of all the previous 1177 chapters; and that St John's Apocalypse is but the books of Moses in full detail. No man and no combination of men could have composed so marvellous a work,—therefore, the Bible is necessarily of God! But man believes with the heart, not with the head; hence the plainest and most obvious truths are foolishness to those temples of Antichrist, those veriest bond-slaves of credulity—unbelievers.

We further find that the seven seals embrace the entire Apocalypse in outline; that prophecy is fulfilled in three gradations—the primary literal, all intermediate symbolic with a sprinkling of the literal, and the ultimate literal; that the Apocalypse is the unveiling not only of the great mystery of Godliness, but of the great counter mystery of iniquity;¹ that Europe will again be the theatre of universal war;² vastly deepened in deadliness; and that the periods as well as the accomplishments of prophecy are reiterated.³

In the existing schools, men are ever disputing about dates and shreds and patches of history; they deny, not in word, but in truth, that this sublime book, which is the very fulness⁴ of all Holy Writ, is “for yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” The seals,

¹ App. A.

² See Vials.

³ See Diagrams.

⁴ Intro., i.

they tell us, are a mere *memoria technica* of ancient Roman history. If so, they convey little instruction to us. The glorious vista of the first seal, which ranges from the Alpha to the Omega of Scripture, is, they say, limited to Trajan and his Cretan successors; and although God has assigned no dates to it, they tell us exactly its commencement and its close. "Such unlearned questions" we are told to "avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes."¹ The prophecies of God are not of so limited an application; still less have we any authority, human or divine, for assigning commencing and closing dates to the visions of the Apocalypse.

Not only does our view of the structure of prophecy harmonize existing schemes, but as we make each prophetic stream, like all Scripture, of universal application, we leave no further room for bickerings as to detail. In our view, all history falls into Scripture, taking place therein according to its kindred vista; prophecy thus becomes universal, and of continuous application, and so in keeping with all God's Word; by other schemes it is fragmentary, of isolated and fitful application, and therefore not Scriptural.

Thus daily and hourly each child of God may, according to ever-varying circumstances, realize and appropriate the prophecy and promise of the first seal. Each divine may hourly realize its accomplishment in the seed sown by him, each layman in his daily walk and work; our nation, in the going forth of her armies to the battle-fields of truth; and our

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 23.

gracious Sovereign, in the peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety which have proved the bulwarks of her throne, while others not founded on the Rock of Ages have crumbled piecemeal. And all this in addition to its grander accomplishments in nations and in empires.

So likewise with all the seals and the entire Apocalypse, as, if heard, we humbly hope to show.

Here, then, is no limitation—the prophetic vistas are of universal, of daily, hourly, momentary application. And if our scheme be true, man can no longer darken the sure light of prophecy by cavilling about insignificant details. Let his mind but fully compass the vast structure of God's rivers of prophecy, and he will be so occupied with the majesty of the rolling torrent, that its myriad drops will range themselves in the order assigned them by God, and there rest undisturbed.

We may observe, that the usual Scriptural emblem of truth is a lamp or candlestick; and there is much teaching in the fact. A lamp sheds its rays, not in an isolated, fitful, and disjointed way, but continuously, uninterruptedly, universally.

God terms the lamp of prophecy a “sure light,” “a light shining in a dark place.” But according to our commentaries it is a fitful ignis fatuus, now burning in Pagan Rome, now in Papal, at one moment in Jerusalem, at another in the last day. And whence this fitfulness, but that each expounder of God's “sure light” catches the ray which strikes his eye and mind, and rightly convinced that that is truth,

he rejects every other ray, and deems every one but himself blind. The law of natural light is continuity, the law of prophetic light is continuity. Natural light is lineal, so is prophetic. Natural light proceeds on the principle of CONTINUOUS PROGRESSIVE EXPANSION; so does prophetic light. To isolate, disjoint, or limit natural light, is to injure and darken it; to limit, disjoint, and isolate prophecy, is to darken and injure its light. We have long talked of a 'stream of light,' we must now learn to talk of a stream of God's sure light—prophecy.

And as regards the retrospection of our scheme, it will not be denied by those who admit—and admit it every believer must—that the water and blood which flowed from our blessed Lord's wounded side, streams backward to regenerate Adam, to sanctify the offering of Abel, and all the Levitical and patriarchal rites—washing and beautifying in its purple flood the earliest and the latest churches.

Outline of Revela- 25. In brief, then, the seven epistles
tion. prepare the universal church by a com-
pendious and God-like exhortation for her warfare.

The seven seals marshal the contending hosts, and give the issue of that warfare. The seven trumpets add fuller details, the seven vials the fullest details.

Lastly, the profits of this work are devoted to the efforts now making by the church in behalf of the Jews. We state this in order that every one, who, by giving it publicity, helps forward its sale, as

well as every purchaser, may know that they labour not in vain, nor spend their money for nought, as it will go to that treasury which ever yields an abundant, because an eternal increase, whose true and unfailing motto is, "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth." We therefore anxiously and earnestly solicit the vigorous aid of every reader of this, our feeble effort on behalf of truth. And as certainly as they shall not give a cup of cold water in Christ's cause without their reward—for God himself hath spoken it—so certainly shall the promise concerning Zion be fulfilled to them, "They shall prosper that love thee." Even were we dead to every nobler impulse, self-love might alone lead us to take the deepest interest in the Jews; for their return to God's favour will be to us, "as life from the dead."¹ The church's path to glory lies through Zion.

ALDOURIE, Feb. 20, 1852.

P.S.—We observe in Mr Habershon's pamphlet, entitled, "A Glance at the Events of 1848," page 19, certain axioms or "principles of interpretation," adopted both by Mr Elliott and himself. He shows very clearly that Mr Elliott has not followed those axioms, and adds, "No interpretation that cannot bear to be tested by them, can be correct."

If we may be permitted to judge, our scheme bears the test, agreeing with those axioms to the letter, and to the fullest extent of their meaning. As this agreement was wholly unintentional on our part, it is the more striking. The reader, when conversant with our scheme, may look to those general principles, and satisfy himself.

We have always deprecated the proceeding of laying down principles, and then squaring the Word to them, and have hitherto, therefore, overlooked all such attempts. But that certain broad and general axioms

¹ Rom. xi. 15.

laid down by others, should be carried out unconsciously by us, TO THE LETTER, AND TO THE FULL, seems worthy of notice.

For the sake of easy reference, we adjoin these axioms:—

1st, That all prophetic periods, from Scripture analogy, not to say from common sense, should be the most memorable eras in a nation's history—the grand political changes and revolutions in the Roman world—the most eventful epochs—marked and well-determined epochs in history.

2nd, That the one great Apocalyptic subject is, the history of the Christian Church, and of the world in its connection with it.

3rd, That in all the Apocalyptic visions, each part hath its own chronological position.

4th, That in like manner to the best historians, in the first instance, events of some long period of time are described; then, on the principle of retrogression for explanation, a new chapter or section is commenced, tracing a different class of events through the same interval of time, by marks of parallelisms, or running correspondences, and bringing it up to the same period of time. Or, as expressed by Bishop Horsley, the curtain is often suddenly dropped upon the action that is going forward before it is finished, and the subject is continued in a shifted scene of vision.

5th, The necessity of attention to every minute peculiarity of description, and each minute feature as exhibited.

THE END OF FIRST PART.

NEW VIEW OF THE APOCALYPSE:

OR,

THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT AND OF EUROPE
IDENTICAL.

BY

C. E. FRASER TYTLER,

H. E. I. C. CIVIL SERVICE.

PART II.

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PREFACE TO PART II.

THE First Part of this Work exhibited in theory that structure of prophecy which we are now about to reduce to practice. We trust, therefore, no one will enter on this, who is unacquainted with Part I.

Some of its remarks were discursive and supplementary—the result of viewing the universe as one vast school: God the preceptor—Truth the lesson—we the children, aliens to Truth—and His three great standards of instruction,

The Book of His Word;
The Book of Nature;
And the Book of History.

The whole combining to form one vast and perfect piece of mechanism, in which we find myriad minute details,¹—all vocal of truth—all eloquent of Deity—all intimately connected, as well as mutually dependant—all constantly bearing out and illustrating the one the other—“all working together for good”

¹ Conspicuous among these stand events past and passing, within and around us—typology, analogy, prophecy, parables, symbols, signs, &c., &c., &c.

—and all having one common aim, the leading mankind to Truth.

These general remarks were likewise meant as a counterpoise to the isolating and disjointing systems hitherto in vogue; for until the prophetic eye of the church expands itself so as to embrace God's entire structure, our contests about shreds and patches must continue, and so long as they do so, thousands will be scared from the holy sublimities of the Apocalypse. Unanimity is unquestionably our great want; and if men would but sink their small differences, and dwell on their great agreements, the public would be lured back to a subject of the deepest and holiest interest, and one of the most vital personal and political importance.

One word as regards our title. It was chosen because nothing but a new view seemed likely to recall public attention to the subject; because it differs from the only three existing schools, (which, however, it harmonises); and because we could find no better. Were it wholly and entirely new, it were not truth; its germs may therefore be found here and there in human writings, but there is quite enough so-called novelty¹ in it to justify the name. To originality,

¹ This will be immediately apparent from our Chart and structure of the Apocalypse. Even the double sense of prophecy has not been reduced to any system. One of its ablest advocates understands it to "obtain only in some of the more distinguished monuments of prophecy." While no Apocalyptic scheme yet divulged has resolved the twenty-one seals, trumpets, and vials into ten plagues, agreeing in order, number, letter, and spirit with the plagues of Egypt, and, like them, commencing with a *triple imitation of Truth by the Powers of Darkness*; or traced each separate vision of the Apocalypse down to the day of judgment; or shown the source of each in the books of Moses; or the universal application of each vision, or the continuity

however, we lay no claim—it seems to us incompatible with truth; and the Spirit saith expressly, “there is nothing new under the sun.” In other words, truth has existed perfect from the beginning, and cannot be added to or diminished. “The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun.”¹ These are words of truth, and they are the keystone of prophetic structure; while the exact correspondence between the Egyptian and Apocalyptic plagues is strikingly corroborative. The solution now offered of the seals has never been broached, yet the truth is as old as Genesis; hence, owing to our fallen language, we are forced to call that new which in reality is old.

And if any ask, what emboldens us to write on such a subject? we reply, that we are all commanded to strive² earnestly after Truth, and heedless of obstacles, in God’s strength to follow it, in all its phases, knowing that “in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” Meanwhile, may He who blessed the widow’s mite, accept this humble offering to the treasury of Truth, however poor the giver and the gift.

of each; or held illustration to be a rule of prophecy; or shown that Revelation gives us “the effect of every vision;” or that the seals unveil the two great counter mysteries of the gospel. Nor have any held that prophecy is literal in its primary and ultimate applications, and symbolic in all intermediate ones, with a sprinkling of the literal; while our Chart differs *in toto* from any yet given. Yet all this has existed in Scripture from the beginning.

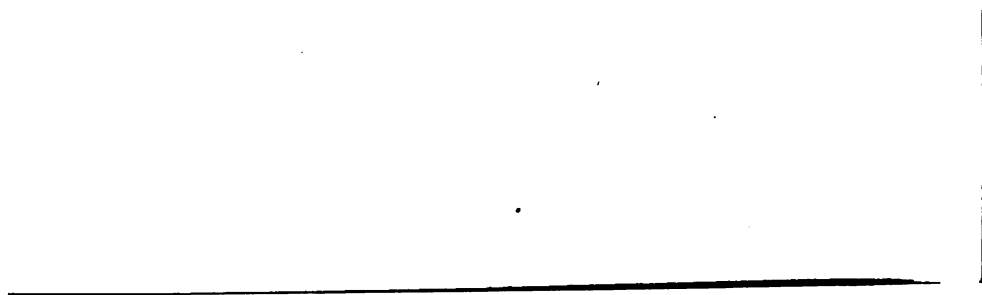
¹ Eccles. i. 9.

² Our version reads “strive.” But the original means to agonise, to combat and contend earnestly for.—(Luke xiii. 24.) “Strive for the Truth unto death, and the Lord shall fight for thee.”—(Eccles. iv. 28; Phil. i. 27.)

ERRATA.

- Page 21, Line 17,—from “eternity,” to “all,” in inverted commas.
Page 54, Note 3,—for “Is. ix. 14,” read “Isa. ix. 15.”
Page 84, Line 6,—for “holy officer,” read “holy office.”
Page 103, Note 1,—for “App. B, Pro. iv.,” read “App. D, Pro. iv.”
Page 100, Note 1,—to “App. E, on Historical Parallels,” add “and App. B,
on Symbolic Language.”

to the existing churches—to each and every succeeding church, and to each and every member thereof. This universality of application renders it difficult to point out, as some have attempted, successive phases of the Christian church, corresponding chronologically with the epistles. To each phase of the church every word has, does, and will hereafter apply; “and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” They have also a prophetic burden, as will be evident to the careful student. The character and nature of the Apocalypse requires this view; the term “seven,” so full of mean-



CHAPTERS I., II., AND III.

INTRODUCTION.

THE epistles contained in these preliminary chapters are addressed to seven churches of proconsular Asia. The churches are named in geographical order, and according to the relative importance of the cities. In this, as in all, Scripture is invariably accurate.

2. Few will doubt that the applications of these epistles are manifold. Primarily and emphatically to the existing churches—to each and every succeeding church, and to each and every member thereof. This universality of application renders it difficult to point out, as some have attempted, successive phases of the Christian church, corresponding chronologically with the epistles. To each phase of the church every word has, does, and will hereafter apply; “and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” They have also a prophetic burden, as will be evident to the careful student. The character and nature of the Apocalypse requires this view; the term “seven,” so full of mean-

ing, also requires it. There is a mystic meaning in God's seven days—equally so in his “seven churches.” Nor is it evident that seven churches only existed: it is rather assumed by those who treat the epistles as simply historic. Many instances might be given of the words of Holy Writ, containing most important revelations, where man usually sees nothing but abstract history. “God rested the seventh day, and hallowed it,” seems the plainest narrative; yet we learn from the apostles, that it is in the highest degree prophetic—the “hope of Israel,” the very gateway of futurity; sweeping through countless types and shadows to a vast issue still in the bosom of ages.¹

True, the subject of these epistles is plainly stated, —“The things which are.” But the prophetic spirit usually selects the nearest and most conspicuous events to shadow forth and illustrate all kindred ones; in other words, it makes the present typify the future. Thus, these addresses become, by the law of prophecy, applicable to all churches, in all ages; aye, and to every member thereof. David wrote of “the things which are,” but the Holy Spirit made them all so many keys to the future; so that, while David is giving us his own or contemporaneous history, he is prophesying of Christ, of his church, and of each individual member of Christ's body. And so throughout prophecy.

The finite mind is ever limiting the prophetic Word to isolated patches of history; but this is not analogous with the procedure of the Infinite. “Canst

¹ Sketch, 8.

thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? As high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.”¹

In further proof of the addresses being prophetic, we have only to point out that most of the promises and references lead us to the consummation.

3. The numerous parallel passages indicate a close connection between these epistles and the rest of the Apocalypse. “The various promises made to those who overcome at the opening of the book, are realised at its close. The promise is, in brief, the realization in detail. This is a marked feature in all prophecy; it is ever expanding and amplifying; each vision, and almost each word, adding something to the preceding.

It is an admitted fact, that the germ of all prophecy lies in, “It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”² Throughout Scripture we behold this strife between Truth and Error, or Christ and Antichrist. It commenced with Cain and Abel; it ends on the battlefield of Armageddon. Thus we find prophecy always culminating, expanding, and increasing in intensity. Revelation is the grand terminus of all Scripture and all prophecy; there all its vistas close; and if we would fully understand their end and aim, there we must look. The Apocalypse is the best and clearest expounder of all Holy Writ.

¹ Job xi. 7-9.

² Gen. iii. 15.

4. A comparison of the Alpha and Omega of Scripture—Genesis and Revelation—will convince us of this; and show that Holy Writ is perfect unity, from its commencement to its close. In the one, we see man formed; in the other, reformed. In the one, the first Adam reigns; in the other, the Second Adam reigns. In the one, we have the details of the first Adamic dispensation; in the other, the detailed dispensation of the Second Adam. In the one, we have God's Sabbath rest; in the other, we have his "Sabbatism" of rest. Here God rests from his six days' work of creation; there, from his six thousand years' work of redemption. Here we have the first paradise; there, the second; while gold, and precious stones, and rivers and trees of life, characterise alike the one and the other. Here let us note the intensifying that pervades alike God's Word and works. Paradise is restored, but in glory and splendour augmented many million fold. The tree of Eden is restored, not as Satan's instrument for poisoning a world; its leaves are now for the healing of the nations. God's rest has returned, not as before, a few fleeting hours, but countless ages of eternity. Man is restored, but no longer subject to evil: he is equal unto the angels;¹ an heir of God, and joint-heir of Christ; a king, a priest;² a judge³ in heaven; a sharer of the throne of Deity.⁴ Far as the eternal Sabbath exceeds one Sabbath-day, so far does man's last estate exceed his first. Revelation is but the re-Genesis; and as man

¹ Luke xx. 36.² Apo. v. 10.³ 1 Cor. vi. 3.⁴ Apo. iii. 21.

to be born again, and made fit for heaven, must be baptized by water and fire, so must earth. Near the close of the first Adamic dispensation, God punished a guilty world by water; near the close of the Last Adamic¹ dispensation, he will punish a guilty world by fire,² whence will emerge the long-promised "new heavens and the new earth." The comparison might be carried throughout the Old and New Testament. In the one, the literal Israel, after many trials, enter the promised land; in the other, the whole Israel of God enter the heavenly Canaan. The enemies of the first church are visited by many plagues, and engulfed; the enemies of the last church are similarly visited, and engulfed. The plagues of Egypt are but the plagues of the Apocalypse; and St John does but give in detail what Moses and the older prophets gave in brief. Here, too, mark the increase in intensity. The first church enters an earthly Canaan; the last, a heavenly one. The first plagues are sharp and momentary; the last, severe and prolonged. The first enemies of Christ and his church were one nation; the last are from among all the nations of the Empire of Error. The first enemy was in a moment engulfed and drowned; the last, after earth's most fiery trials, is engulfed in everlasting burnings, and fuel of fire. At the opening of the war, a portion only of the church's blood soiled the earth; but in virtue of the first seal, the tide of battle turns, and, at its close, blood flows "even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." This onward

¹ Christ is termed the Second Adam.

² App. B., Historical Parallels.

march is visible alike through history and Holy Writ. Hence we may judge what earth's last days will be. History, we have endeavoured to show,¹ is cyclical. Days, of whose return the world dreamt not, are coming round upon us. And to the terrors of those days will be superadded the unparalleled terrors of the last day. Awful are the descriptions thereof in Holy Writ, and various the names:² The day of the Lamb's wrath—The day of darkness—The day of the Lord—are only a few. And, inasmuch as the eternal Sabbath of the Apocalypse exceeds the Sabbath of Genesis, in so much will the day of the Lamb's wrath exceed all other days. It is to this day of terrors that the Apocalypse ultimately points with its thousand unerring indices; while, with godlike compass, it seizes on every intermediate day that flies, on every intermediate event, and makes all combine to form an ever accumulating "cloud of witnesses," beckoning and propelling man to knowledge, to wisdom, and to truth.

5. We do not sufficiently bear in mind the name and object of this book. It is "The Unveiling" of the mighty warfare between Truth and Error, which, commencing in Eden, and ever intensifying as it proceeds, ends only when death and hell are cast into the lake of fire; while the structure of the prophecy is such, that it, and all the events which it embraces, are made to shadow forth, by countless types, the issue of that warfare, and Christ's glory at

¹ App. B., Historical Parallels.

² See App. H., Passages of Holy Writ descriptive of the Day of the Lord.

his appearing and kingdom. We have no excuse for mistaking the burden of the Apocalypse. God states it in the plainest language. "Write," says He to his prophet, "the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter."

Its name, "The Unveiling," at once refutes the current prejudices against its study: prejudices wholly traceable to man's preference of the easy to the difficult, and to the Spirit of Error,¹ who strives to veil all antagonistic truth. While the reiterated blessing promised to all who hear, read, and understand it, clearly shows that all who will, may do so, for the promises of God are without limitation.

6. We may remark the recurrence of the number seven: there are seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials, seven visions of wrath, seven visions of grace, seven anthems, seven eyes, seven spirits, seven angels, seven horns, seven heads, seven hills, seven kings; a sevenfold description of our Lord, a sevenfold warfare, with seven promises to the victors, and seven earnest warnings to study the prophetic Word! Here is no limitation such as man advocates; but the perfection of fulness, worthy of the Godhead.²

7. And as Revelation is linked to Genesis, so are the first verses of the Apocalypse with the last, and with all. At its close we learn that our Lord is to "put down all rule, and all authority and power."³

¹ App. A.

² Notes, i. 4.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 24.

At its opening, He is therefore styled "Prince of the kings of the earth." At the close, His coming to judgment is fully detailed; at the opening, He is spoken of as "Him which is to come"—while it is added, "Behold He cometh with clouds." In the former, we have the resurrection of redeemed humanity expanded into all its glories; the Redeemer is therefore in the latter styled, "The first-begotten of the dead." In the one, the church militant is depicted in the suffering, death, and ascension of her true and faithful witnesses. Her Lord is therefore in the other styled, "The faithful and true witness;" He that "was dead, and is alive for evermore." Each word thus becomes a preintimation of the coming future, and is gradually expanded from word to sentence, from sentence to verse, from verse to chapter, until it fills the whole book.

8. In like manner, it is obvious that the church and her children are prepared for a fast impending warfare, for each and every exhortation closes with a promise to all who overcome. These victors, disallowed indeed of men, but honoured of God, eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God; receive a crown of life; have their names enrolled in the register of heaven; are not hurt by the second death; and receive from Christ a new name, with a white stone, in token of acquittal. They also receive from their "Leader and Commander"¹ power over the nations, to rule them with a rod

¹ Isa. lv. 4.

of iron, and to break them to shivers as a potter's vessel—even as their Lord received of his Father. They are clothed in white raiment, and walk with Christ, who confesses their names before his Father and before the angels. They are made pillars in the temple of God; they go no more out, they bear Christ's new name upon them, and the name of his God, and of the city of his God, the New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven. Yea, they "sit with Christ on his throne,"¹ even as He also overcame, and is set down with his Father on his throne."

9. Lastly, let us note, and noting let us remember, and remembering let us bring to good effect, the lesson conveyed to us in the sevenfold earnest invocation which God makes to ALL, to hear the words of this prophecy. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." And lest such an invocation, reiterated by God seven times, should fail to move man—whose ear is ever heavy to spiritual things,—a double beatitude is superadded, "Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand." This occurs in no other book of Scripture. Such is the importance which God attaches to Revelation: and justly, for it is the consummation of, and key to, all Holy Writ. But how different is the estimate man forms of it! Unwilling to make the prayerful exertion for which so sublime a subject necessarily calls,

¹ Apo. iii. 21.

he frames endless plausible, but false excuses, to soothe a conscience ill at ease under a sense of disobedience. The great enemy of God and man, "who blinds the minds of men, lest the light of the glorious gospel should shine into them,"¹ is specially interested in blinding mankind to the glorious truths of the Apocalypse, because all the deep and mysterious STRATEGY of his last and therefore deadliest STRUGGLE, with all its mighty issues, including his eventual DEFEAT and CAPTIVITY, are therein fully unveiled.

The continued assaults of the Spirit of Error against the truths of Revelation, are legible alike in the annals of past years and present moments. It is presumptuous, cry many of his blinded instruments, to approach so deep and mysterious a subject; and a mock² humility is made to serve as a palliative for idleness, faithlessness, and disobedience. The age is one of action, not of speculation, cry others: forgetting that this very activity is man's great snare, fostered by the arch-enemy, "lest men go and sacrifice to their God."³ We attend to matters of more use to the church, say others: forgetting the Word which saith, "This ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."⁴ The greatest lights cannot agree regarding Revelation, how can we hope to understand it, cry others: thus making the shortcomings of some few earnest labourers in God's vineyard a plea for idly loitering without, and neither entering, nor labouring therein. Rome denounced the reading of the Apocalypse, and all mention of

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 4.² App. A.³ Close of App. A.⁴ Matt. xxiii. 23.

its Antichrist ; and what Rome did by her thunders, her decretals, and her hierarchy, Protestants equally do by apathy, false arguments, and disobedience. Alas ! we need no other proof that the Spirit of Error is not confined to Rome, but leavens far too deeply our sacred institutions, our dearest circles, and our holiest thoughts.¹

Happily, the rivers of God's mercy flow on, though man heeds and tastes them not : hence the promise still holds, that he that readeth shall be blessed. And inasmuch as the beatitude is "doubled unto us twice, it is because the thing is established by God."²

¹ App. A.

² Gen. xli. 32.

CHAPTER IV.

INTRODUCTION.

IN the three previous chapters we had a beautiful exhortation to the seven churches, and through them to the church universal, containing all that was necessary for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. Thus was the church prepared for its impending warfare, the fire of which our Lord told¹ them "was already kindled." To strengthen His churches for this strife, their Leader vouchsafed unto them many precious promises;² and inasmuch as the close of that strife will be its deadliest, a special promise attaches thereto—"I will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world;" while it is added, "Behold I come quickly."³

2. But before the future can be unveiled, the church must learn whence that future has its impulse. The

¹ Matt. x. 34, and Luke xii. 49-51.

² Intro. i. 4.

³ Obvious as is the connection between the first three chapters and the rest of the Apocalypse, some of our best commentators omit them altogether, as if no part of the prophecy. They are its corner-stone.

seven-sealed scroll is to reveal to us the vast consecutive history which fills the interval between the first and second advents. An endless, and complicated, and godlike mechanism is required to conduct this vast train of events to the destined issue. Hence, heaven opens, and we are shown the Moving-Spring of all creation !

Lo ! seated on the throne of heaven, shining like the jasper and the sardine stone, the church beholds her Lord and her God ! Around the throne she sees all the attendants upon Deity. His power, His attributes, His likeness, His love, His mercy, the ministering spirits that do His pleasure, and the very employments and language of heaven, are fully described.

This is the region of Influence, whence every event on earth, great and small, has its impulse. Earth is the region of Events ; and these two regions God has thus intimately joined. The eye of faith beholds Jacob's ladder connecting them, and God's ministering angels ascending and descending. Let us then use our high privilege, and by it ascend into the Holy of holies, and thence learn to trace EVERY passing event to its real source. We shall not then be so often perplexed by the whirl of passing events, nor be left to grope our way to truth through the dark chaos of secondary causes. Christ is that ladder,¹ the way, the truth, and the life—the only mode of access unto God. By using it, Christ dwells in us and we in him.

¹ Ladder, in Gen. xxviii. 12, might be translated highway, or way. Christ is called "The Way," John xiv. 6.

3. This and the next chapter are one and the same vision. The first describes the Godhead; the next, the Man-God: and the two combine to form an amplification of the first vision of the Apocalypse.

4. The seer's eye, here as elsewhere, glances from things before him to their antitypes in the distant future. Hence we further learn from this chapter the ultimate and glorified position of the church.

It is impossible to avoid the conclusion, that the seer's vision ranges down to the end of time, when the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. In the first chapter it was stated, "Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him!" Here we have a further development of that coming, when heaven shall be opened, and we shall see face to face, and know as we are known.

For the full understanding of this vision, therefore, we must go to the three last chapters of the Apocalypse, for all its glories given here in brief are there detailed in full.

5. Not, however, to forget the present while we look to the future, let us remember that there is even now a way into the Holy of holies, by which all may enter and live. Jesus is that way; faith, the staff; the Spirit, the guide; holy angels, the guard; prayer and promises, the provision for the march; and heaven, the home. "Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the

breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked—praying always with all prayer and supplication.”¹

6. Let us remember, also, that the crystal sea is now open to all, that all may wash therein, and be clean and live. Jesus is now inviting all men, of all nations, to it. “Ho, EVERY ONE that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.”² Ere long, many thus lovingly invited, must, if they refuse, exclaim, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!” while they who accept the call have EVEN IN THIS LIFE a glorious foretaste of that bliss, of which eternity is the measure; felicity, the state; angels, the company; the Lamb, the light; and God, the all in all!

¹ Eph. vi. 14-16, 18.

² Isa. lv. 1.

CHAPTER V.

INTRODUCTION.

THE fifth chapter is a further amplification of the first and fourth, wherein the seer was shown the glory of heaven, and of the King of kings ; and such was the overpowering effect of the vision, that he “fell at His feet as dead.”

Now he sees, in the right hand of Him who sat upon the throne, a book or roll written within and without, sealed closely and perfectly. No being in heaven or in earth was worthy to open the book, or to look thereon ; and St John wept at the prospect of the future glories of the kingdom, the church's inheritance, remaining unrevealed. How many professed followers of St John wholly disregard this prophecy, and even dare to denounce its perusal and study—while God is earnestly and lovingly invoking them to share in His counsels, and to become cognizant of His intimate designs in redeeming our lost inheritance !

One of the elders said to St John, “Be of good cheer, weep not : the Lion of Judah, your Lord

- and your God, has prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof."

2. The subject of the Apocalypse, or, as it is here called, the Sealed Book, is the closing, and therefore deadliest strife between the two great mysteries of Truth and Error—the final triumph of the one, the total overthrow of the other, and the establishment in millennial glory of Christ's kingdom: his "purchased possession," and our sure inheritance—an inheritance mysteriously lost by Error, and as mysteriously to be regained by Truth. Well might John weep at the prospect of its loss! He knew that by the first Adam man was cast out of paradise—made subject to vanity—a forfeit to Satan—so that the whole creation groaned and travailed together in pain. But he likewise knew of that far better kingdom which the Second Adam should bring in; and this, so far from being an unpopular doctrine in those days, constituted "the hope of Israel." They waited, watched, and longed for His appearing, and the redemption by Him of the lost paradise—Christ's inheritance, and ours as joint-heirs with him.¹ Hence He alone was worthy to open the book, and loose the seals, thereby fully to disclose the mysterious process by which the redemption of our lost inheritance should be effected, despite the opposition of the Adversary, whose aim it is to perpetuate the curse.

3. Why He alone is worthy, and prevails to do so,

¹ Notes, v. 1.

is next explained. The seer looked, and lo ! a Lamb, as it HAD been slain, but now encircled with all the symbols of Deity, stood in the midst of the throne, and came and took the book out of the hand of Him that sat upon the throne.

4. This was the signal for one universal burst of praise and adoration. The hosts of heaven fall down, every one of them with harps, and golden vials full of incense, and sing, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof ; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood. And hast made us unto God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth." Then the angels of heaven, whose number was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, take up the flying strain, and sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Then follows a response from every creature in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, and all were heard saying, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen !"

The theme is too sublime for human realization ! —the scene too dazzling for mortal ken ! Yet in this assembly we must all appear, and our tongues and hearts must HERE be turned to join in this heavenly anthem. Else, far from being kings and priests to God and the Lamb, and reigning with

him on a renovated earth, "which the glory of God doth lighten," we must depart into outer darkness, where the contrast to these sublime strains shall be, "weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth."

5. Having passed the outer courts and threshold of the Apocalypse, and entered with the seer into the Holy of holies, let us pause, in order the more deeply to impress on our minds the intimate connection which is here depicted, and will ever be found to exist, between the visible and the invisible—the region of Influence, and the region of Events. The first three chapters depict the church militant on earth, the next two the church triumphant in heaven. The one is linked to the other by the strongest of bonds—those of Christ.¹ These bonds, mighty to the pulling down of opposing strongholds, though not palpable to the natural eye, are plainly discernible to the spiritual. By them the two are inseparably joined, forming one "communion of saints." The triumphant is but the perfect consummation of the militant; the heavenly church is but the antitype of the earthly; and the scenery, language, and symbol of the former are all borrowed from the latter, because in prophecy the seen is ever made to depict the unseen.² Without, we repeat, keeping in view this inseparable connection between the region of Influence and the region of Events—in other words, between the visible and invisible agencies who

¹ Intro. iv. 2.

² Rom. i. 20.

are JOINTLY engaged in the visions now unfolding—we shall not understand the Apocalypse. It unveils all the visible earthly agents, it is true, but it equally unveils two higher, hidden, secret, and antagonistic agencies,¹ who are the grand Prime Movers of all on that stage on which man alone appears. It is the overlooking of this main feature of the Apocalypse, which has chiefly caused man's darkness, doubts, and differences. So obvious was this connection to St John, that he says he saw "the Son of Man in the midst of the churches."² So should we by the eye of faith see our Lord—even in the midst, doing and ordering ALL THINGS, for He is "above all, and through all, and in you all," and from Him proceedeth "every good and every perfect gift."³

6. Nor must we limit the scene before us to any one portion of Christ's church. The whole is embraced in the seer's vision, which is as universal as it is sublime.

It is clearly no partial and limited glance that St John takes, for he says, "I BEHELD and HEARD the voice of many angels, and the voice of the redeemed churches,—the voice of cherubim,⁴ and the voice of seraphim,—and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands: and every creature which is in heaven and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, HEARD I saying, Blessing, and

¹ See Seals.

² Apo. i. 13, 20.

³ James i. 17.

⁴ See Apo. iv. 6.—On Four Beasts

honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."¹ Here is no limitation.

Such was St John's anxiety lest this book should not be opened that he wept. Alas ! it has now been open to the church many centuries ; but the professed followers of St John, so far from weeping its loss, give it no heed ! It is rarely read in our churches—more rarely preached in our pulpits—passed over by the large majority of even biblical students, and like all that is too holy and too pure to be of earth, disregarded by the faithful, and condemned by the faithless.

¹ Apo. v. 11-13.


CHAPTER VI.

INTRODUCTION.

THE seven epistles prepared the universal church by a compendious and godlike exhortation for her warfare; while to EVERY VICTOR within her pale, great and precious promises were made. The next two chapters connected the region of Influence with the region of Events, thereby showing whence all the events about to be portrayed have their impulse. Thus far all was preparatory,—now the first seal is broken, the “Unveiling” has commenced.

Following the example of the Apocalypse, our Introductions contain the mere outline of each chapter, while the Notes supply detail.

The seals form unquestionably the most difficult chapter in Holy Writ. They unfold great and awful mysteries, and must therefore be approached with reverence and godly fear. They contain at once the vastest and yet the simplest, the most compendious and yet the most specific, prophecy yet given to the church. Prayer and faith, however, can make them as



clear to us as were the mysterious cherubim to Adam. "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting,"¹ and in this our readers must trust.

So completely is the whole sequel of the Apocalypse outlined in these seals, that, plain as we have endeavoured to make the subject, we despair of the reader fully understanding the vast compass of the seals, until he has accompanied us to the end of the book, whence, looking back, he will perceive that they were radiant with light, which is gradually evolved in each succeeding chapter; for, as Revelation is the best interpreter of the Old Testament, so are the trumpets and vials of the seals.

2. But to commence. The seals clearly depict a warfare, or battlefield, for we have in them every symbol indicative thereof, and only such symbols. For instance, there are war-horses set in battle array; their riders are armed with a bow and a great sword. Peace is taken from the earth by them, and they have power to kill. Their colour is that of conquest, triumph, blood, mourning, and death. All the concomitant horrors of civil and domestic war, including famine and pestilence, follow in their train, as do Death and Hell to receive their victims; while one Warrior on this battlefield goes on conquering and to conquer, and receives the laurel wreath or crown given to all victors.

Such is the battlefield. That depicted, we behold in the fifth seal its victims—the noble army of martyrs, slain by the great sword of the Adversary. The

¹ Matt. xvii. 21.

sixth seal discloses the further political issues of the war, when every "empire¹ and state is moved out of its place" to make room for that "kingdom which shall never be destroyed."²

3. Now, if we look through Scripture, and Scripture here is our only guide, we find precisely such a warfare constantly alluded to—a warfare commenced in Eden, closed at Armageddon. Holy Writ is replete with such passages as these: "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."³ "Fight the good fight of faith."⁴ "Stand fast in one spirit, striving together for the faith."⁵ "Ye have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin."⁶ "I exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith."⁷ The soldiers of Christ are constantly and variously exhorted to war a good warfare by the prophecies;⁸ to put on the whole armour of God, the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, the shield of faith, that they may be able to resist all the fiery darts of the wicked.⁹ They are also exhorted to watch as good sentinels, not to faint, to be ever ready, for "no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life."¹⁰ Their Lord is expressly termed their "Leader and Commander."¹¹ He teacheth their hands to war, and their fingers to fight.¹² He girds us with strength unto the battle, and subdues under

¹ Mountain and island are the well known symbols of empires and states.

² Dan. ii. 35-44

³ 2 Tim. ii. 3.

⁴ 1 Tim. vi. 12.

⁵ Phil. i. 27.

⁶ Heb. xii. 4.

⁷ Jude 3.

⁸ 1 Tim. i. 18.

⁹ Eph. vi. 11-17.

¹⁰ 2 Tim. ii. 4.

¹¹ Isa. lv. 4.

¹² Ps. xviii. 34, and Ps. cxliv. 1.

us those that rise up against us.¹ He was slain by the enemy, "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil."² We read, too, of His "fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries;"³ that out of His mouth goeth a great sword, quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword,⁴ that with it He might smite the nations; that in righteousness doth He judge and make war; that the blood of His enemies shall be sprinkled upon His garments, and stain all His raiment; "for the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come."⁵ He is expressly termed by the prophets, "The Captain of the Lord's host."⁶ We also learn that His followers have a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people.⁷ His prototypes were oft-times men of war. His "arrows are drunk with blood." Yet on He goes, conquering and to conquer, and in His majesty rides prosperously because of Truth.⁸ He fainteth not, neither is weary, until He has subdued every enemy under his foot. His familiar title is, "Captain of our salvation;" while all His followers are exhorted to combat earnestly to enter the ranks of Truth;⁹ to resist the Adversary until he flee from them;¹⁰ that the weapons of their warfare are not carnal; that they do not war after the flesh;¹¹ that God giveth us the VICTORY through our Lord Jesus Christ, and that

¹ Ps. xviii. 39. ² Heb. ii. 14. ³ Heb. x. 27. ⁴ Heb. iv. 12, Apo. xix. 15.

⁵ Is. xxxiv. 8. ⁶ Jos. v. 15. ⁷ Ps. cxlix. 6. ⁸ Ps. xlv. 4.

⁹ Luke xiii. 24—to strive, agonise, or combat earnestly.

¹⁰ James iv. 7.

¹¹ 2 Cor. x. 3.

even death is swallowed up in victory;¹ that the God of peace shall bruise the Destroyer of peace under our feet shortly;² that the Lord will make a short work upon the earth;³ that a man's foes shall be they of his own household;⁴ that persecution ariseth because of the Word;⁵ that the councils of hell shall not prevail;⁶ that whosoever shall lose his life for Truth's sake, shall find it.⁷ We read, too, of unclean spirits gathering kings and nations to war against the Lord and his anointed;⁸ while to the church is given power against unclean spirits.⁹ We read of the enemy sowing counterfeit wheat in the church, and that enemy, we are told, is the Devil; while the sower of the true wheat is Christ.¹⁰ We read of even the devils being subject to the soldiers of truth, and of Satan and his hosts, after a mighty combat, being cast out of heaven.¹¹ We are warned not to give place to the Devil,¹² and to beware lest he get an advantage over us.¹³ And lest we quail before the enemy, our Commander is styled, The Lord strong and mighty, THE LORD MIGHTY IN BATTLE.¹⁴

4. Of this warfare our Lord and the apostles repeatedly warned the church. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword."¹⁵ "I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I if it be already kindled."

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 57.

⁴ Matt. x. 34-36.

⁷ Matt. xvi. 25.

¹⁰ Matt. xiii. 39.

¹⁸ 2 Cor. ii. 11.

² Rom. xvi. 20, and Apo. vi. 4.

⁵ Matt. xiii. 21.

⁸ Apo. xvi. 14.

¹¹ Luke x. 17; Apo. xii. 9.

¹⁴ Matt. x. 34.

³ Rom. ix. 28.

⁶ Matt. xvi. 18.

⁹ Matt. x. 1.

¹² Eph. iv. 27.

¹⁵ Ps. xxiv. 8.

"Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you nay, but rather division."¹ St Paul repeatedly explains this strife, and the benefits accruing to those who have the mark of the soldiers of truth; in other words, the Sealed of Revelation. His beautiful exhortation to them is, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil. For we wrestle NOT AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS in heavenly² places. Wherefore, take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."³

5. Time would fail to tell the myriad allusions⁴ to

¹ Luke xii. 51.

² Marginal reading.

³ Eph. vi. 10-18.

⁴ Paul says, "I have fought a good fight."—(2 Tim. iv. 7.) "Ye endured a great fight."—(Heb. x. 32.) Of his followers, he says, "Having the same conflict which ye saw in me." They are exhorted to be "in nothing terrified by their adversaries."—(Phil. i. 28-30.) Our Leader is termed our strong tower,

this strife, direct and typical, with which Holy Writ is replete. Suffice it to say, that, from Genesis to Revelation, we find the Spirit of Error warring against the Spirit of Truth, and disputing inch by inch the progressive advance of that kingdom which shall never be destroyed.¹

Such being the case, of what warfare do the seals speak? Of Trajan's and those of the Prætorian guard? or of the war of Scripture, waged by the Mystery of Iniquity against the Mystery of Godliness? Unquestionably of the latter, of which the former is but a fragment. To say the former, were to build an Apocalyptic scheme on *one* doubtful historic reason, and utterly to reject *manifold* unerring scriptural ones. We infer, then, that the first four seals with their common war-horse depict the battlefield between the triune Spirit of Truth and the antagonistic triune Spirit of Error. The fifth seal gives us the slain in that battle, and the sixth the mighty political results thereof. In other words, the Mystery of Godliness and the counter Mystery of Iniquity are prepared in the first four seals for battle; while the next two seals give the grand issues, personal and political, of this conflict, down to the end of time.²

6. Looking again to Scripture, we find it replete

our fortress, our deliverer, our shield, &c.—(Ps. cxliv.) We read of the war of evil against our souls.—(1 Pet. ii. 11; James iv. 1.)

¹ Dan. ii. 35-44.

² "For the great day of His wrath is come."—(Apo. vi. 17; Sketch, p. 72.) How obviously do the seals carry us to the end of time. The language is so plain, that nothing but the necessities of a chronological structure of prophecy could have blinded commentators to the clear language of the sixth seal.

with references to the great Adversary of God and man. His war-cry is counterfeit! counterfeit! counterfeit! and no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.¹ We must not limit the seals, and bring them down to our narrow understandings, but expand our minds to compass them. And it may perhaps assist us to full and clear views, if we but repeat, that opposed to the Mystery of Godliness stands a counter Mystery of Iniquity, having for every act and strategy of Truth, a counter act and strategy of Error.² All pertaining to these two great mysteries culminates in two points; and this our world may be fitly compared to two vast pyramids meeting at the base, the point of the one embosomed in heaven, the other in the abyss of hell. On their four quarters lie the myriad gradations by which mankind are led by the Spirit of Truth to the pinnacle of happiness, and by the Spirit of Error to the abyss of misery.

Counterfeit, then, we repeat, is the adversary's aim; and this, his main strategy, we may expect to find largely apparent throughout his contest with truth, and broadly developed on this his battlefield. Accordingly, we there find triune Truth opposed by triune Error.

7. It is the rule of prophecy, first briefly to pre-intimate, and then fully to detail. And inasmuch as both the Old and New Testament abound with brief and shadowy allusions to these two great and awful Mysteries, we should *a priori* expect some portion of

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 14.

² App. A.

the Word devoted to their complete development. That portion is Revelation—a word necessarily implying Mystery. Accordingly we find that book wholly engrossed with these antagonists, and their continuous warfare. For instance, the Beast from the bottomless pit, that is, the triune Spirit of Evil, makes war on the soldiers of Christ, and overcomes them and kills them.¹ Then Christ and his soldiers destroy them that destroy the earth, and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. And throughout the details by which this glorious consummation is achieved, we read of the strife which is ever raging between the sons of Truth and the sons of Error. The latter tread the holy city under foot. Their commander and leader, the Dragon, stands to devour the church's offspring. He gives the Beast his seat, and power, and great authority; and the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet, the trinity of Error, make war with the saints and overcome them. But the Mystery of Godliness conquering shall conquer—hence we read that he that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity; he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. While every soldier of Truth that overcometh, receives the laurel crown of victors, and inherits all things. This war is even carried into the invisible world, and Michael and his angels fight against the Dragon and his angels; but, in virtue of the first seal, they prevail not. The Accuser,² day and night, before God of all who are fighting the

¹ Apo. xi.² Apo. xii. 7-11.

good fight of faith, is cast down and overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the Word of their testimony. The Dragon thereon anticipating the "great wrath" of the Lamb, persecutes the faithful, and sends a flood of enemies to engulf the armies of Truth.

But the adversary's tactics, however triumphant for a time, are eventually of none effect. The great day of the Lamb's wrath arrives, and none is able to stand. Error's sons call to the rocks to fall on them, and hide them from the wrath of the Lord God of Hosts. "For God has come from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. His brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand; and there was the hiding-place of his power. Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet. He stood and measured the earth, he beheld and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting."¹ We read, too, of the blood of the enemy coming out of the wine-press, even unto the horse bridles, and of the valley of slaughter, to which all the fowls of heaven are invited to eat the carcasses of the slain. We see also the Beast and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat on the white horse and against his armies. And the Beast is made captive, and with him the False Prophet, his executive,² and

¹ Hab. iii. 3-6.

² "That wrought miracles *before him*." "Before" implying the place of one's executive or minister.—See Notes IV. Seal.

cast into their prison-house, the pit. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the white horse, and all the fowls were filled with their flesh. The Dragon, the father of the children of disobedience, and the leader of the armies of Error, likewise goes into captivity, where he is bound, shut up, and sealed for a thousand years; then loosed for a little season, which he instantly employs in again rallying the nations to battle from the four quarters of the earth. With them he compasses the camp of the saints, but fire comes down from heaven and devours his hosts. And then the great Adversary himself, and all his powers, and all his followers, and death and hell, are cast into the lake of fire: for the Mystery of Godliness has in its majesty ridden prosperously *because of Truth*,¹ and conquering has conquered every obstacle and every foe. Such is the outline of the Apocalypse, and such the contents of the seals.

8. Revelation from first to last is replete with these two great antagonistic mysteries and their warfare. What more likely, then, than that the seals should thus generally signify² them, while the trumpets and vials fully detail them? This we say is not only *a priori* probable, but is analogous with all prophetic structure; whose rule it is first to give a dim but compendious shadow, and then add line upon line, detail upon detail, here a little, and there a little, until all is gradually and fully developed. For instance, the Egyptian plagues were but the Apocalypse in shadow,³

¹ Ps. xlv. 4.² Apo. i. 1; Notes.³ Sketch, p. 64.

and cannot be understood save in its light. And as the contest of the church in Egypt opened with a triple counterfeit¹ of Truth, so precisely does the Apocalyptic warfare commence with a triple imitation,—Error assuming a triune form, in imitation of triune Truth.

The cherubim² set to guard the garden of Eden were but an epitome of the gospel. They showed how fallen man should be received back to God's favour, and be restored to his image. That dim outline was gradually filled in, by every word, line, verse, and chapter of the Old and New Testament. So progressive was the work of amplification and expansion that four thousand years were occupied therein. The cherubim was the acorn—the Old and New Testament the full-grown oak. So it is with the seals: they are the seed—the trumpets and vials the full-grown tree.

Revelation is but the plenary development of all Scripture and of all prophecy. In it we have "the effect of EVERY vision," the winding up of the entire Word and Work of God. The seals are an epitome of Revelation, and the cherubim were an epitome of Scripture; there is then an evident

¹ We have already explained (Sketch, p. 64) that the plagues of Egypt and of Revelation agree in number, character, order, letter, and spirit. Besides this, both open with a triple imitation of Truth. Now, this perfect and *double* agreement was wholly unexpected by us. Long after completion, we compared our Chart with Moses' Apocalypse, and found this exact correspondence throughout ten plagues; for the twenty-one seals, trumpets, and vials resolve themselves into ten distinct plagues, as will be apparent in our Chart; and these ten plagues, alike in Egypt and in the Apocalypse, begin with a triple imitation.

² Notes, iv. 6.

appropriateness in the cherubim summoning forth the four commissioned spirits of the seals. The connection between the four living creatures or cherubim, and the four seals, is, we repeat, mysterious and important; they mutually irradiate each other. The former were a symbolic opening outline of all Scripture—the latter a symbolic closing outline of all Scripture. There is an obvious parity and connection between them, and accordingly we here find the one evoking the other.

9. The prophecy, moreover, of the seals is evidently a general one. There is no definite specification of names, places, periods, or times, and the symbols all forbid their restriction to one class of events.¹ Let any one study these symbols in all their minutiae, and in all their analogical shades; and he will find that they cannot be limited to the wars of Pagan Rome without evident violence to the language² of Holy Writ. To do so, requires us to admit hyperbole and exaggeration in Scripture, and this we know does not exist. Hence, when the Spirit obviously refers

¹ See Gen. Rem. vi. 7. This is the language of Barnes, who applies the seals to Pagan Rome, as well as our own. We are not therefore extending the symbols to suit our solution. Barnes gives them the same extended meaning. For instance, he says, "The bow of first seal might denote a warrior, a hunter, a preacher, a ruler—any one who exerted power over others, or who achieved any kind of conquest over them." He adds, "It is emblematic of war, hunting, and the effect of truth."

² Take, for instance, the term "*white*" in first seal. It is constantly referred to in Scripture, and always in connection with godliness. Are we then to reject this plain and obvious sense, and restrict the term to Pagan Rome: and that for the *single* reason that she, like other nations, used a white horse in her triumphs? To do so is to prefer *one* historic reason to *manifold* scriptural ones.

to the last day, in the very language used by all the prophets of that day, we should admit the fact at once, and not limit the sixth seal to the wars of Constantine. It is most true that the laws and language of the seals are applicable to the wars of Rome; but only in the manner in which natural laws are applicable to atoms and to worlds—to the falling star and to the falling fig. Spiritual laws and language are, like all God's laws, of universal application. Hence each and every writer has been able to give a plausible application of the seals. The two great antagonistic mysteries symbolised by them are universal, and their laws, language, letter, and spirit equally apply to the whole and to each component part. This at once explains the numberless solutions which have been given of the seals; and that very number is, we think, some proof of the correctness of the solution now offered.

10. In fine, the war of Scripture is the war between Truth and Error, commenced in Eden, closed at Armageddon; and the war of the seals¹ is the war of Scripture. The battles of Trajan and the Antonines, of the Prætorian guards, or of Constantine, are but isolated fragments thereof. There the Dragon's great sword was busy, but the Spirit of Truth overruled it to His glory.

11. Now, that two such mysteries exist as those disclosed in the seals, Scripture plainly tells us. That they

¹ There is no mistaking the combatants. The defeated adversaries themselves declare the Conqueror to be "*The Lamb*."

are antagonistic, we read in the same Word, and in every line of history. What more probable, then, than that they should be depicted in Holy Writ in their position of antagonists, and with the several issues of their strife appended? This we have every reason to expect, considering the mysterious nature, the vast power, and the importance to heaven, hell, earth, and man, of these two great and awful mysteries, their strife and its results. But if not in the seals, where shall we find them?

Their very name, MYSTERY, sufficiently accounts for their having remained so long unveiled; while Error, ever blinding, has doubly veiled his.

These two mysteries were to fight their deadliest battle during this our dispensation. The Adversary comes down in great wrath, knowing that his time is short.¹ The Mystery of Godliness, with its noble army of martyrs, was to suffer; for thereby her followers multiplied and grew; but was, in Christ's might, to go on conquering and to conquer. While the hate, pride, blasphemous usurpation, and murderous efforts of the other to annihilate Truth and her followers, were now to culminate. How necessary, then, the Revelation of the Seals, and how timely their disclosure! And what more likely than that the Holy Spirit should begin, *ab ovo*, and lead us step by step to the consummation of Iniquity, and the triumph of Godliness? This the Apocalypse does.

12. But some may ask, What is the Mystery of

¹ Apo. xii.

Godliness, and what the Mystery of Iniquity? To this we reply, from first to last, Scripture, history, and nature, bear witness to both. All the dim types of the Old Testament testify of, and point to them; the New, ever and anon hints¹ at, and names them; while the Apocalypse plainly and fully unveils them. Men deal with fragments, because they see in fragments: God sees the end and the beginning; hence He deals with the whole. Scripture recognises but two spirits in creation, the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error; two classes, the children of obedience and the children of disobedience, "the children of God and the children of the Devil,"² the sons of Truth and the sons of Error. The first class belong to the "household of God;"³ the second, to the household of Satan. The one are the followers of Christ, and fight under his banner; the others are the followers of Antichrist, who slay Christ's followers. "And wherefore slay they them? Because their own works are evil, and their brethren's righteous."⁴

The one class appertains to the Mystery of Godliness; the other, to the Mystery of Error. And if asked, "Whereby shall we know them?" Scripture answers, they shall be known by "those who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern between good and evil."⁵ The one mystery is good, the other evil: choose ye this day whom ye will

¹ "The Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."—(Gal. iii.) Both mysteries are here.

² 1 John iii. 10.

³ Gal. vi. 10; Eph. ii. 19.

⁴ 1 John iii. 12.

⁵ Heb. v. 14.

serve? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, follow him.¹

And as regards the visible component parts of these two mysteries, the tests are numerous: "By their fruits ye shall know them." "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil. He that committeth sin is of the Devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin."² "Try the spirits whether they be of God. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God; and this is that spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world." "Hereby know we the spirit of Truth and the spirit of Error."³ Love is our interpreter. The plainest truths to loveless hearts are parables, parables mysteries, and mysteries foolishness.

13. The accompanying extract from our Chart gives the outline map of the seals. In it we have the entire Apocalypse in brief. Every subsequent word, line, verse, and chapter are devoted to the plenary development of this outline.

The Apocalypse is, we repeat,⁴ unintelligible if we disconnect the region of Influence and of Events. Every event in the latter has its impulse in the former. The one region is the reflex of the other, for

¹ Jos. xxiv. 15; 1 Kings xviii. 21.

² 1 John iv. 1-6.

³ 1 John iii. 7-10.

⁴ Intro. v. 5.

"God has made the invisible things to be understood by things visible."¹ To separate these two regions is to darken the Apocalypse, and to sever what God has intimately joined.

The Mystery of Godliness is a term of vast compass. Its Head is in heaven, its foundation filleth the earth. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." Its Head, we repeat, is on high; but triplicity is not confined to heaven—earth is full of it.² 'There are three which bear record in heaven, and three which bear witness on earth, and these three agree in one.'³ In like manner, corresponding with the heavenly Trinity, we have on earth the Spirit of Christ, of His bride, and of their offspring, and these three agree in one. For, "as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly."⁴ "He that is joined unto the Lord is ONE spirit."⁵ "We are all made to drink into ONE spirit." "We are many members, but ONE body." "By ONE Spirit we are all baptised into ONE body."⁶ We are "changed into the SAME image by the Spirit of the Lord."⁷ "We are builded together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit."⁸ We are "ONE house-

¹ Rom. i. 20.

² App. A and B.

³ 1 John v. 7.

⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 48.

⁵ 1 Cor. vi. 17.

⁶ 1 Cor. xii. 13-20.

⁷ 2 Cor. iii. 18.

⁸ Eph. ii. 22. See also John xi. 52; Eph. iv. 4-6, 15, 16.

hold of faith, and Christ our head." We are ONE temple of God—Christ the chief corner-stone. We are exhorted to "stand fast in ONE spirit, striving together for the faith."¹ For this ONENESS our Lord earnestly prayed: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me. That they all may be ONE, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be ONE in us. I in them and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in ONE."² Although, therefore, there are different phases of this mystery, and myriad component parts, they all combine to form ONE compendious and perfect whole, and are justly represented by ONE seal, while the Spirit of Truth is the cement which unites all the component parts into ONE great and compendious Mystery of Godliness.

The counter Mystery of Error, as elsewhere explained,³ is the would-be coequal of the first mystery,

¹ Phil. i. 7. "We are one with Christ."—(*Common Prayer*.) The oneness of godliness is equally alluded to by human writers. "There is but one body, one spirit, one hope, one calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one heart, one soul, one mind, one holy bond of truth and peace, one God and Father of all."—(*Dr Todd*.) "The mystical body in heaven and in earth is one. As all rays are united in the sun, so all spirits and souls of the righteous are united in the person of the King of saints." "As the vine has one nature in root and stem, branch and spray, fibre and fruit, so the True Vine in earth and heaven has one substance and one life." "The laws of the city of God run down to us. The unity of the heavenly Jerusalem is the source of unity in the invisible church. It is one on earth, because it is one in heaven. It is one in heaven and earth, because it is united in one law." Godliness is, "by its very nature and law, one and indivisible, ever enlarging, all embracing: gathering in all nations, fusing all races, harmonising all tongues, blending all thoughts, uniting all spirits; making the earth once more of one life, of one speech, of one heart, and of one will."

² John xvii. 20-23.

³ App. A.

and is more than coextensive. Its head is in hell, and he marshals his forces from the four quarters of the earth. It has the show and counterfeit of unity, without its perfection. The one is all seven, implying the perfection of fulness;¹ the other all six, implying a close approximation thereto, and yet a falling away from it. Hence called the Apostasia²—"the falling away." In the one, our Head is seven, His bride seven, their offspring seven; in the other, the head is six, his bride six, and their offspring six. This triune beast, whose "tail is the prophet that teacheth lies,"³ is elsewhere termed "the Beast from the bottomless pit,"⁴ "and his number is six hundred, three score and six."⁵ This mystery, like the former, has its myriad subdivisions, but all form part and parcel of the great whole; while the Spirit of Error is the cement which unites all its component parts into one great and compendious Mystery of Error.⁶

¹ Intro. i. 6; Notes, i. 4.

² "God made man upright, but he has sought out many inventions."

³ Is. ix. 15.

⁴ Apo. xi. 7. "The Beast" is here mentioned as if there had been a previous reference; but none such had occurred, *totidem verbis*. The reference obviously is to the triune beast of the seals. Explain the seals otherwise, and it is impossible to say to what "The Beast" refers.

⁵ This does not preclude the further application of the number to the details of the Beast, but, on the contrary, confirms it—the one application illuminating and explaining the other.

⁶ In the English Liturgy, we read of "the devil, the world, and the flesh," which is merely another phase and term for the Trinity of Error, as will be apparent in the sequel. The church prays that each member of Christ's body "may have power and strength to have victory and to triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh."

ITS GRAND ISSUES,
PERSONAL AND POLITICAL.

THE BATTLEFIELD OF TRUTH AND ERROR.

| THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS. THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH. TRINITY IN UNITY. | | | THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY. THE SPIRIT OF ERROR. THE COUNTERFEIT TRINITY. | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| I. Seal. | | | II. Seal. | | |
| 7 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| The Spirit of Our Lord, His Church His People. Christ, His Bride, Their offspring, or executive. | | | The Spirit of Beast and His Bride, The Red Dragon, The Adversary, Eras of Blood, | | |
| Sons of Truth. The Holy City. GOLDEN ERAS. | | | False Prophet. Their offspring, or executive. "Bastards," or Sons of Error. Eras of Death. | | |
| Heaven opens, and Christ appears riding on a white horse: his vesture dipped in blood: and the armies of heaven follow him on white horses.—(xix.) | | | Three unclean Spirits issue from this Triune Beast, and gather the nations to the battle of the Great Day of God Almighty.—(xvi. 13.) | | |
| V. Seal. | | | VI. Seal. | | |
| Personal Results. The slain by the Great Sword of the Adversary. | | | Political Results. Principalities and Powers, lay and ecclesiastical, overthrown, because the Great First Mystery conquering, shall conquer. | | |
| Eras of Martyrs. | | | Eras of Convulsion. | | |
| Last witnesses slain. | | | The kingdom of God shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.—(Dan. ii. 35, 41.) | | |

14. The actors on this scene are the Prince of Peace and the Prince of this world—the Destroyer of peace—angels,¹ good and evil—men, good and bad—earth, the arena—heaven and hell, the invisible agencies and audience.² And what an idea does it give us of our own temporal insignificance, to think that we are but monads moving, half instinct with life, in two such stupendous Mysteries, and then quickly passing away to a permanent position in the one or the other!³ On the other hand, what an exalted view have we here of the value of one soul, when we behold Heaven and Hell thus striving for the possession—the one working⁴ to save, the other to destroy!

We may now see why we compared the streams of prophecy to rivers ever flowing. For these two great mysteries are ever working, and must work, until the one conquers and the other is destroyed. The rest of the Apocalypse fills in these seals; but though their streams be neither so deep nor so extensive—being rather tributaries to the main streams—still, as part and parcel of the said mysteries, they, too, necessarily flow on to the end of time. So, likewise, with the visions of old, as the shadows of the new; they, too, have one common terminus—THE DAY OF THE LORD.

¹ The law, we read, was ordained by angels; so, too, the gospel, Heb. i. 14; so, too, the counter mystery, App. A.

² We read of our being compassed about with such a cloud of witnesses, Heb. xii. 1; of angels desiring to look into these things, &c. The references to the agency and ministrations of angels are numerous. See also App. A.

³ Events, too, have their place herein as teachers. Not men alone, but their acts also. “By their fruits ye shall know them.” But we wish to keep the outline clear, and not cumber it with detail, which belongs to the trumpets and vials.

⁴ “Hitherto my Father worketh, and I work.”—(John v. 17.)

We may here likewise learn why such a variety of interpretations have been given to the seals. Like the laws of nature, the laws of Truth and Error are universal. They apply to all, and to each and every component part. No marvel, then, that their laws and language should have been found applicable to each and every solution,¹ just as the laws of crystallization apply to the largest as well as to the minutest forms. God's universal laws are written in Scripture, and thus to understand Scripture is to understand all things; for in the Word "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."² It was at this imperishable fount that Solomon sought and received "wisdom and knowledge,"³ and in its fulness wrote, "The thing that hath been, is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done."⁴ His senses were exercised to discern between Good and Evil; and he knew that their war would continue, as it had begun, down to the end of time.

¹ Take, for instance, the sixth seal. Grotius applies it to the wars of the Jews and Romans under Vespasian and Nero; Hammond, to the defeat of the Jewish leaders in those wars; Mede, Cressner, Whiston, More, Daubuz, Newton, Elliott, and others, to the overthrow of Paganism and the establishment of Christianity in the Roman empire; Brightman, to the persecution of Diocletian; Vitringa, to the overthrow of the antichristian powers in the Western Roman empire; Professor Stuart, to the destruction of Jerusalem; Cocceius, to the wars of the Emperor Frederick against the German princes in the sixteenth century; Habershon, to the French Revolution of 1790; Dean Woodhouse, to the end of the world; Irvine, &c., to the overthrow of Christianity and the rise of Atheism; Lord, to the French Revolution, and its overthrow at the fall of Bonaparte in 1815; Barnes, to the destruction of the Western Roman empire by the Goths; Berengaudus, to the rejection of the Jews and call of the Gentiles. And these are but a portion of the solutions offered.

² Col. ii. 3.

³ 2 Chron. i. 12.

⁴ Eccles. i. 9.

15. Under the old dispensation, the church had streams or lines of prophets; under the new, we have prophetic streams, which are ever speaking. Thus, fully to understand the ever present teaching of the seals, is to have a key to all Scripture, for all Scripture appertains to them. Fully to understand the seals, is to have a key to all history, for all history appertains to them. Fully to understand the seals, is to have a key to all nature, for all nature is subject to them. Fully to understand the seals, is "to know one's self," and whence it is that "when we would do good, evil is present with us;" and why there "is a law in our members warring against the law of our minds, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin."¹ Above all, fully to understand the seals, is to obey God's command, to have our senses exercised by reason of use, to discern between good and evil.²

Proceed we now to details.³ The battlefield of Truth and Error is here revealed to us; and four commissioned "spirits of the heavens," as Zechariah calls them, are evoked by the cherubim, to "go to and fro in the earth,"⁴ as ministering spirits in that strife. For, as the law was ordained by angels in the hands of a Mediator,⁵ so, we read, is the gospel.⁶

¹ Rom. vii. 21-23.

² Heb. v. 14.

³ In the seals, we have laboured simply to give the broad outline, in order to avoid cumbering them with detail. To act otherwise, were to anticipate all the subsequent chapters, for they are wholly devoted to the detail of the seals. We must, however, beg the reader's special attention to our Notes on the seals, as they supply much that cannot be embraced here.

⁴ Zech. i. 6.

⁵ Gal. iii., and Acts viii. 53.

⁶ Heb. i. 14, and numberless passages.

The first spirit is evidently a good one—the spirit of Truth. The next three, we learn from the sequel, are unclean spirits, coalescing and co-operating. This is obvious; and in uniting the three, albeit imperfectly, in one, we are only following the entire teaching of the Apocalypse. The Red Dragon, seven times by St John termed the Devil, is the mainspring¹ of the Apostasy—he inspires his second and third persons. They are here exhibited as one compendious whole, and shortly afterwards termed “the Beast from the bottomless pit;” while, in the sequel, they are given in each and every phase, and in all their various analogical shades.

16. The first four seals, we repeat, with their common war-horse, depict the battlefield between Truth and Error. The leaders and agents on both sides are of a twofold nature, the seen and the unseen—Christ² and the Prince of this world; each with their agents, visible and invisible. The one in the region of Influence; the other in the region of Events.

The first seal exhibits the triumphant and victorious march of the Spirit of Truth, going forth “conquering and to conquer.” From the golden age of Rome as a foreground, the seer’s vista glances through the golden mist of years, down to the gates of glory, when “heaven shall open, and, behold! a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True,

¹ Of Apo. xii., Faber says, “The mainspring of the Apostasy is the Great Red Dragon.”—(ii. 128.)

² Emmanuel, God with us. “He is the head of the body, the church.”—(Col. i. 18.)

and in righteousness doth He judge and make^e war."

The ever present events of history,¹ are, we have said, made prophetic of ulterior ones. We find the ancient prophets ever seizing on passing and familiar events to illustrate their visions; and we should, therefore, naturally expect to find St John using the passing events of Roman history to illustrate his. This the first seal does; while the second, taking the civil wars of Rome as its foreground, depicts the parallel but antagonistic march of the Spirit of Error, through the same mist of years, down to the time when, being bound, "they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain."² Its characteristics are rebellion, war, persecution, cruelty, a great sword, and power to kill. It is therefore elsewhere termed the "Great Red Dragon." In its antagonism and strife with Truth, it is incessantly mimicking it, and adopting its every form, the better to deceive the nations.

The Spirit of Truth is trinity in unity; but it was the impious asseveration of the Adversary, "I will be like the Most High"³—hence he is triune also, though the imitation is, as usual, imperfect. As exhibited in our Chart, and as fully developed in the Apocalypse, the Spirit of Error is composed of three persons,—THE DRAGON, THE BEAST, AND THE FALSE PROPHET.

The second seal then depicts the first person in this Trinity of Error—the Great Red Dragon, wield-

¹ Sketch, 14.

² Or kingdom. See App. A. and B.

³ We solicit the reader's careful and prayerful consideration of App. A. and Sketch, as well as of the Commentary.

ing a "great sword"¹ for "he was a murderer from the beginning." His war is against the righteous, and he is the destroyer of righteousness.²

17. The third seal, taking Rome's eras of fiscal oppression, extortion, injustice, and severity as the foreground, depicts the second person in the Spirit of Error, or "the Beast." The characteristics of this vista are the outward show and proclamation of justice and truth, without the reality and power thereof. Darkness broods over it; hypocrisy is conspicuous, and truth is veiled. Spiritual scarcity, destitution, and famine ensue. For such nourishment as is offered in the market, prices are fixed; and the bread of heaven and the souls of men are made merchandise of; while the unction of the Holy Spirit, and the memorials of a Saviour's dying love, are withheld.

18. The fourth seal, taking Rome's chief eras of mortality as the foreground of the vista, depicts the third person in the Spirit of Evil—the lamb-like Beast, or False Prophet.

This third beast is the tail of the triune beast. "The prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail."³

Prophecy is ever amplifying,⁴ hence we find that all the characteristics of the two first persons meet and blend in the third. From Apocalypse xiii. we

¹ "The wicked which is thy sword."—(Psa. xvii. 13.)

² He takes peace from men. But in Isaiah xxxii. 17, we learn that peace is the work of righteousness. Christ "made peace through the blood of his cross."—(Col. i. 20.) This the Adversary aims at destroying.

³ Isa. ix. 14.

⁴ Intro. i. 4.

learn, that the first beast empowers the second, and the second the third. The two first act in and through the third, who is in fact their Executive—while the three ever coalesce, as far as in them lies. Hence the plural is applied to them in this seal. Hence, too, the almost universal sway of the tail or executive of the triune beast, wielding, as they do, the four sore judgments of God—sword, famine, death, and wild beasts.

Most justly, then, do we find in their train, spiritual famine, its concomitant disease, and their inevitable attendants, “death and the grave;” while the pale, and livid, and ghastly hue of death—temporal and spiritual—broods over the whole vista.”¹

19. In these four seals, we have a complete outline of the battlefield between Truth and Error: in other words, of the entire Apocalypse. That depicted, the war-horse is withdrawn, and in the two remaining seals we are taught some of the grandest issues of this war. But before proceeding, let us glance retrospectively to the source of these seals in Genesis. There, as here, the Spirit of Truth went forth conquering and to conquer: it moved over the face of chaos and of night, and changed all into beauty and harmony. “And God said, Let there be light, and there was light;” and at the end of his six days’ work, God “looked on every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good!”

¹ For fuller details of this and all the seals, the reader must turn to the Commentary.

Then the second seal of Genesis opens, and the Spirit of Error, fearful lest he may loose the sovereignty of a world, which he had long specially deemed his own, moves over the face of renewed nature, and mysteriously prevails to turn its bliss to wormwood.

The third seal opens, and we behold Cain, the head of the mighty apostasy, persecuting the church, and vainly trying to substitute, by one final blow, the darkness of Error for the light of Truth.

But both these arch-efforts failed! "The Adversary" beheld with consternation Truth spring anew from the ruins of paradise, and from the blood of the church. He perceived with dismay and anguish that this ever-living stream of Truth would go on conquering and to conquer, and that, gathering depth and strength as it flowed, its impetuous flood would eventually sweep him and his hosts back to the abyss.

He therefore opens a fourth seal in his Mystery of Iniquity, whence flows a mighty antiapostolic stream of false prophets, who should "go forth to the kings of the earth and of the whole world," and by their false teaching, and miracles which he gave them power to do, build up an antagonistic Empire and Church of Error, to do war against the true church, and against the Lord and his anointed.

The wisdom of the serpent perceived that Truth would have its Executive to go forth, and recruit the armies of the living God; and he therefore instituted his antagonistic Executive, whose unceasing work it should be to recruit, muster, and discipline the hosts of hell. The object of the true apostolic

stream was to sweep all men into the nets of heaven: the aim of the antiapostolic stream was to sweep all men into the snares of hell. Conspicuous in the one stands Abel, and ten thousand times ten thousand others: conspicuous in the other stand the magicians of Egypt, Balaam, and his myriad followers!

20. In the fifth seal, are primarily depicted the entire martyrs of Pagan Rome—the soldiers of truth who have fallen by the “great sword” of “the Adversary.”

The seal, taking Rome’s “Era of Martyrs” for its foreground, discloses a long vista of Pagan, Papal, and Infidel martyrdoms; while the reward of all who have “fought a good fight,” even robes of righteousness, garments of salvation, and crowns of glory, are set forth to encourage the true church through this vista of tribulation and vale of tears. At the head of this long line of martyrs stands Abel; in its centre our blessed Lord; and at its close the final witnesses slain immediately before the church’s ascension to glory.¹ Between Abel and Christ rank all the witnesses of the Old Testament; between Christ and the close, those of the New. Forming in the aggregate, as we afterwards read, “ALL that were slain upon the earth.”²

21. The sixth seal, taking Rome as its foreground,

¹ The reader will find in the sequel that this triplicity exists in every vision of the Apocalypse, giving to them a fixity not attained by any other view of the Apocalypse. This triplicity pervades Scripture, history, and nature.—See App. A. and B.

² Apo. xviii. 24.

discloses a great revolution BOTH IN CHURCH AND STATE. The monarchy of Rome is extinguished in night ; and the religion of Rome is bathed in blood.

Revolutions, the most momentous which earth has seen, yet they are but faint shadows of far greater ones, when the whole church of Error shall be trampled under foot in the wine-press of the Lord, and when every kingdom and state throughout the empire of Error shall be moved out of its place. "For the great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" In the previous seal, we had all the PERSONAL, here we have all the POLITICAL results of the war, begun because of paradise, and renewed with deadliest intensity because of the gospel.

At the head of this long line of convulsions stands the great earthquake, which mysteriously restored the empire of chaos and of night to renewed creation. In its centre, that revolution which made Zion the Cain among nations, the murderer of her Saviour, her King, and her God. At its close, that mighty tempest, wherein the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the heavens pass away with a great noise, and the sun become black as sackcloth, and the moon become as blood, and the stars of heaven fall like untimely figs. And finally, even earth and heaven flee away before the face of Him who sitteth upon the great white throne, until there be no place found for them,¹—the "vagabond, the fugitive," the Cain of the universe!²

¹ Apo. xx. 11 ; and Dan. ii. 35.

² Cain is a mysterious type of which we have not yet had the antitype. Shadows thereof we have had ; each dispensation has had its standing warn-

22. From the above we learn that the seals are not isolated and past events, but divine ideas and laws, ever present and ever fulfilling. They unveil principles of righteousness and of unrighteousness, which are ever at work within and around us, bearing impetuously onward to one common consummation—the triumph of Godliness, and the subjugation of Evil. Man gropes his way slowly and blindly down each stream of time, and sees only immediate objects: God beholds the end and the beginning, and to Him all appears one perfect and finished whole. Hence we here read, “The day of His wrath is come,” for He “calleth those things which be not, as though they were.”¹ Time He measures not as we do: with Him a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years.² His foreknowledge unites and harmonises all things. His eye compasses eternity. His works, to man tediously progressive, are to Him at once complete in order, symmetry, and fulness. In the gaze of the All-Seeing, the Mystery of Godliness necessarily stands full, perfect, and complete, from its first source to its final issue. Our ideas are fragmentary—God’s perfect and complete. But His words necessarily coincide with His ideas; hence they embrace in a breath the source and the consummation.

ing. Cain is the first church; the Deluge and its effects—Sodom and Gomorrah. In our own age, Jerusalem; and in the millennial dispensation, the smoke of Babylon shall go up for ever and ever. It is not therefore improbable that such portion of this earth as shall be finally rejected, shall “go out for ever from the presence of the Lord,” and sail through the immensity of space, with God’s mark upon it as a warning to all worlds of the effects of sin. If this surmise be correct, that of universal redemption, which some hold, is erroneous.

¹ Rom. iv. 17.

² 2 Pet. iii. 8.

APPENDIX A.

ON "THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY"—ITS TACTICS, AND FREQUENT IMITATION OF TRUTH.

"To the law and to the testimony : if they speak not according to this word, it is because they have no truth in them."—ISA. viii. 20.

"And Elisha prayed and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes that he may see."—2 KINGS vi. 17.

GREAT is the mystery of Error, and infinite its importance to man ; the reader may therefore bear with us a moment, while we try to furnish a few keys, which duly used may, under divine guidance, partially unfold its mechanism. As we have here endeavoured to crowd into narrow compass many isolated illustrations of the ordinary tactics of the Adversary and his hosts, the reader can only look for dry facts, fitfully and briefly strung together, from each of which he must DEDUCE ALL KINDRED ONES.

1. The unceasing agency¹ of Satan, and his Execu-

¹ The Scripture references on this subject are too many to be quoted here, but if the reader will consult Cruden's Concordance under the words Satan, Evil, Adversary, Enemy, Devil, and the various titles given to the Spirit of Evil, he will perceive how luminous Holy Writ is on the subject.

tive, is fully set forth in Holy Writ. That mankind have but a slender belief therein, though ever at work around and within them, is explained by the Word which saith, "Satan deceiveth the whole world." He is spoken of in Scripture as "the Adversary" of God and man, sometimes as "the Enemy." Hostility to all truth is his constant aim. He began his warfare in Eden, and there made a breach in God's temple, which the Spirit of Truth is ever repairing, and the Spirit of Error ever striving to widen and complete. In paradise he impregnated man with the venom of Antichrist; and knowing that the only antidote thereto is Christ, he unceasingly strives to darken that only path to glory, by mimicking truth, beclouding and overlaying it with error, mystery, and doubt, hoping that by enveloping truth in the smoke of the abyss, and in mists of doubt and controversy, travellers to Zion may lose their way, and stumble into hell.

2. The prominence given throughout Holy Writ to our arch-enemy, forms a singular contrast to the almost total disregard of him by the world. In the former, he is described as "the god of this world," the prince of the power of the air, the prince of darkness, the prince of this world, the Spirit of Error. "He is our accuser before God day and night,"¹ as his very name implies; a roaring lion going about seeking whom he may devour; a sinner from the beginning;² our implacable adversary;³ a murderer; a liar; a

¹ Apo. xii. 9.

² 1 John iii. 8.

³ 1 Pet. v. 8.

tormentor ; the “angel of the bottomless pit ;” Beelzebub ; Belial ; Leviathan ; a wolf ; an adder ; a dog ; a fowler ; lightning ; a serpent ; lucifer ; Satan, that is, our adversary and accuser ; the destroyer, and the great red dragon. These are only a few of the names and symbols applied to him in Holy Writ. And he is but the head of a vast hierarchy, whose name is Legion. Too many in the world, however, regard him as a mere goblin, with whom they have no concern, save to invoke his name as a mere idle expletive—while they discredit almost his existence, certainly his agency.

3. This Spirit of Error though limited, as compared with God, is, as compared with man, wellnigh omnipotent. Nor is he alone,—he has his angels or messengers, a host of evil¹ spirits who obey his behests. These are his invisible agents. But he has his visible ones also : Paul talks of him as “the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience ;” and of his children our Lord says, “The lusts of your father ye will do.” Were our daily experience insufficient to convince us, Scripture declares that he works in, by, and through men. He has therefore large hosts of visible and invisible agents at his command, and with

¹ Judges ix. 23 ; 1 Sam. xvi. 14-23 ; Luke vii. 21, viii. 2-31 ; Acts xix. 12-16. In Ps. lxxviii. 49, it is said, “God sent evil angels among them.” Numberless other passages might be quoted : *e. g.*, Job i. 7 ; 1 Pet. v. 8 ; Eph. ii. 2 ; John xiv. 30 ; Matt. xxv. 41 ; 2 Pet. ii. 4 ; James ii. 19 ; Mark v. 8, 9 ; Matt. xxv. ; 1 Cor. x. 19-21 ; Zech. xiii. 2. See Notes, Apo. ix. 14. Evil spirits seem to have the range of our earth and air—Job i. 7 ; 1 Pet. v. 8 ; Mark v., ix. ; Luke viii., x. ; John xiv. 30 ; Matt. xxv. 41 ; Apo. xx. 3-10. *Et passim*—Their head quarters seem to be hell, Jude 6.

these he is constantly waging war against Christ and his agents, visible and invisible. Nor are these his only forces, for he has "the power¹ of death," he is "the prince of the power of the air," the "prince of this world," "the god of this world," and we read of "serpents and scorpions, AND ALL THE POWER of the enemy."² Now, as Truth works in the children of obedience, so does Error work in the children of disobedience. The two armies are in constant antagonism; during wellnigh six thousand years, no truce has ever been proclaimed, and never can be until the Spirit of Error is bound, shut up and sealed in the bottomless pit that he may deceive the nations no more.³ The strife between these two mighty hosts is signified by types and shadows throughout Holy Writ, plainly symbolised in the first four seals, and fully developed in the trumpets and vials. It is to this fight that Saint Paul so nobly exhorts us, reminding us that "we wrestle NOT AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places."⁴ St Peter says, "Be sober, be vigilant, because your Adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, steadfast in the faith."⁵

4. Now, we obviously cannot carry on this war with advantage, against "wicked spirits, principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in heavenly places," unless we

¹ Both temporal and spiritual. Heb. ii. 14; 2 Cor. iv. 4.

² Luke x. 19.

³ Apo. xx. 3.

⁴ Eph. vi. 12; marginal reading.

⁵ 1 Pet. v. 8.

fully understand the whole tactics of the mystery of Error. God impressively warns us not to be ignorant of the devices of the Adversary, and in his Word furnishes abundant material to dispel such ignorance. But Satan's counterplot is to keep us ignorant of his devices, and not only does he succeed in this, but he even blinds the minds of God's own children¹ as to his very existence. Aye! more—as “the god of this world he blinds the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ shine into them.”²

God's intention is to unveil the mystery of Error, so that man may see it in all its naked and hideous deformity: Error's counterplot is to veil himself, so that man shall be ignorant, not only of his devices, but of his existence; hence he revels in ignorance, darkness, doubt, and disguise.

The Apocalypse is the unveiling of the mystery of Error; no marvel, then, that he has prevailed to transform God's “sure light” into an arena of controversy and doubt. By this device he has prevailed during eighteen centuries to sever the church from Revelation, and to deprive her of the key to the whole of Scripture. Why are the seals yet unbroken, and why have they been confessedly more controverted and disputed than any portion of Scripture, but because they unveil the mystery of Error; and “the rulers of darkness, and wicked spirits in high places” were banded together to veil them, and prevent their

¹ The eminent Coleridge at one time disbelieved in Satanic agency. Apo. xii. 9.

² 2 Cor. iv. 4.

being opened? In proof thereof we have only to observe, that the two portions of Revelation to which men have been most blinded, are those specially referring to the Spirit of Error. The seals unfold its mystery—while the twentieth chapter details its captivity, bondage, ultimate defeat, and final doom. These are precisely the parts of Revelation concerning which doubt, blindness, and controversy specially prevail. Little or no approach to Truth was made in the case of those seals—while no part of Scripture has been so much abused as the chapter named. The early views regarding it were tinged with Jewish error, tradition, and fiction—the precise mixture which we find in all heresies; and the church, not perceiving that “an enemy had done this,” and not discerning between the tares and wheat, blindly rejected both. It is for us with the sword of Truth to war against the encrustations of Error,—not to reject Truth because Error has tried to stifle it.

5. The blinding of men's eyes, St John mentions as God's work;¹ St Paul, as Satan's;² and it is elsewhere mentioned as man's. “Their eyes they have closed.”³ In like manner, during the plagues of Egypt, it is several times said, “God hardened Pharaoh's heart;” and again, it is said, “Pharaoh hardened his heart THIS TIME ALSO”⁴—implying that he had done so in all. Scripture has many such expressions; and a comparison thereof explains that

¹ John xii. 40.—We know, moreover, that “God is not willing that one should perish.”

² 2 Cor. iv. 4.

³ Matt. xiii. 15, and Acts xxviii. 27.

⁴ Ex. viii. 15, 32.

somewhat difficult question, Why God is sometimes spoken of in Scripture as the author of evil. In Isaiah, God says, "I create evil."¹ At the same time we know, from the whole tenor of Holy Writ, that God is not the author of evil. Yet Isaiah's expression is correct and idiomatic. Whatever is done by an agent, is said to be done by the power restraining and directing that agent.² In like manner, it is usual in Scripture to attribute to the Supreme Power, acts which are virtually those of his instruments, and which he merely permits, in order to overrule and evolve good from them. There are diversities of agents at work, but one God; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. All acts are primarily those of God, from whom all powers and permission of acting proceed; secondarily, those of his agents.³ Thus, when one inspired writer tells us that God blinds the minds of men; another, that Satan does so; and a third, that man does so, we perceive that all these statements are strictly correct—the act being done by the permission of the first, the agency of the second, and the wilful sin of the third; in other words, God quiescent, Satan active, man willing. We read, God hardened Pharaoh's heart; that is, withdrew all influence for good,

¹ Isa. xiv. 7.

² It is an acknowledged axiom, "*Qui facit per alium, facit per se.*" App. A, 39.

³ In Exodus xii. 23 we see how God and the Destroyer work. The latter is permitted to select a single victim from each family, and is restrained in all else. Hence the work is said to be God's, though in reality the good only is his, and the evil Satan's. God says, "I will smite," but immediately refers to the real agent, and adds, "I will not suffer the Destroyer to come into your houses to smite you."

whereon evil immediately worked in Pharaoh. When Truth is quiescent, Error is dominant. If the protecting shield of the one be raised, the sword of the other must fall. It is written, "Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth." But how does God chasten? By affliction. And what is affliction? It is the fruit of sin—the one the root, the other the fruit. Scripture considers them as one and the same, giving them one common name and one common symbol—that of thorns. But God is not the author of the root—sin; neither of the fruit—affliction. He says, "I will bring evil upon this people, **THE FRUIT OF THEIR THOUGHTS**, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law."¹

"Our mercies from His hand proceed;
Our miseries from our own."

God is repeatedly said to have destroyed Israel; but we also read, "O, Israel! thou hast destroyed thyself." Here God was not the destroyer; for He is expressly termed Israel's help.² Every day's experience teaches us that afflictions come not singly, but in battalions. And why? But that, so soon as the shield of Truth is removed, the blows of the Adversary, "who loveth to oppress," fall thick and fast. Nor is it until God again interposes, "by lifting up a standard against the Enemy,"³ that trials cease.⁴ In Job's case, God's protecting hand⁵ was withdrawn, and immediately stroke followed stroke with a malice

¹ Jer. vi. 19.

² Hos. xiii. 9.

³ Isa. lix. 19.

⁴ App. A, 39. "I will chasten him with the rod of men."—(2 Sam. vii. 14.)

"The wicked which is thy scourge."—(Ps. xvii. 13.)

⁵ "Behold, he is in thine hand," said God to the Adversary.

and rapidity worthy of the god of hate and of cruelty. God "does not willingly afflict," but the sins of men drive Him from them, and immediately the Enemy strikes, either with his great sword, or with his minor powers, which are many; for we read of "ALL THE POWERS of the Enemy." His name is Destroyer; and when God's shield is removed, his aim is to destroy. Thus, so soon as the shadow of God's hand was removed from Job, the Sabeans, impelled by the Spirit of Error, overcame his servants and carried off his cattle. The Chaldeans slew his servants, and took his camels; fire from heaven consumed his sheep and servants; he himself was smitten with sore plagues; and a great wind—for Satan is the prince of the power of the air—smote the four corners of his house, and killed all his children. It is sufficient that God ceases to ward off evil; the moment He does so, the Enemy strikes.¹ Hence our necessity for putting on the whole armour of God—the whole panoply of prayer. One moment laid aside, and the Adversary wounds. The pain thereof drives us to God, who turns the curse into a blessing, by causing it to take away sin.

6. Man is ever bewildering himself Error inseparable from the Authority of Error. in the labyrinth of secondary causes. Scripture invariably goes to the fountainhead,—tracing all that is good to God, all that is evil to Satan. Thus in the case of the woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, *we* should

¹ St Paul talks of "delivering such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh."—(1 Cor. v. 5.) While David, with a similar view to punishment, says, "Let Satan stand at his right hand."—(Ps. cix. 6.)

not have dreamt of Satanic agency; but our Lord immediately speaks of her as one "whom Satan hath bound, lo! these eighteen years."¹ In our language,² Paul was "accidentally detained" on his way to the Thessalonians; in Scripture language, it is "Satan hindered"³ him. Paul had some bodily ailment, but he does not speak of it as such,—he terms it "a messenger of Satan sent to buffet him."⁴ We should say, David erred and numbered Israel. God says, "Satan provoked David to number Israel." Of Judas's sin it is said, "Satan entered into him." Of the imprisonment of the early saints, it is written, "Satan shall cast some of you into prison."⁵ We talk of a man being brought to the truth. Holy Writ mentions him as "turned from the power of Satan unto God."⁶ And one who has fallen away from the truth, is said to "have turned aside after Satan."⁷ Man talks liberally, and, as he believes, charitably, of idolatry; God characterises it as "having fellowship with devils."⁸ And those who depart from the faith are said to "give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils."⁹ And it is by following Scripture in this and in all things, and from ONE EXAMPLE LEARNING ALL, that we shall "have our senses exercised to discern between good and evil," and be thereby enabled to give our subtle Adversary that prominent position on the battle-field of time which the warning Word of God so clearly assigns him.

¹ Luke xiii. 16.² See Notes, Apo. iii. 17.³ 1 Thess. ii. 18.⁴ 2 Cor. xii. 7.⁵ Rev. ii. 10.⁶ Acts xxvi. 18.⁷ 1 Tim. v. 15.⁸ 1 Cor. x. 21.⁹ 1 Tim. iv. 1.

7. The Spirit of Error corrupted our nature in Eden, and in that corrupt nature he delights to work; and it is by causing us blindly to overlook his constant agency, that he gains his manifold victories over us.

He weaves a snare out of our very virtues, and will at times use our best friends as the instruments of his seduction. Thus it was with Peter when our Lord rebuked him, in the very words previously used to the Tempter himself. In the one case, the God of Error acted directly—in the other, through Peter: hence the same words are used. Our Lord addresses¹ Peter as if Satan were present in him; just as it is elsewhere said, “Satan entered into Judas.”² How oft do fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, friends, urge, apparently in love, Error’s cause! Our Lord instantly detected Satan in Peter’s loving speech. In Job’s afflictions, the instruments of torment used by the Spirit of Error were his wife and friends: while his Satanic cruelties to Job he successfully feigns to be God’s visitations.³ So precisely is it in our day—“a man’s foes are they of his own household.”⁴ He invariably adjusts his temptations to the moral condition of the object of his attack. He corrupted Eve by a laudable and innocent desire—that of knowledge: and if so successful over unfallen humanity, how much greater his success over our corrupt and fallen natures! Our holy Saviour he tempted with God’s holy promises; our hungering and fasting Saviour he tempted with bread: and having pre-

Matt xvi. 23.

* John xiii. 27.

* Job i.

* Matt. x. 36.

vailed to destroy the universal dominion of the first Adam, he impiously hoped to destroy that of the Second, by offering to give our Lord "all the kingdoms of the earth, and the power and the glory thereof."¹ This was his first attempt to anticipate Christ's kingdom, and to set up a universal Antichrist. If he thus assailed the Master with things lawful, how much more the servants! "Perimus licitis," is his motto; or, as Solomon expresses it, "We fall by little and little:" hence he is ever watching and feeding our leanings, inclinations, failings, weaknesses, and corruptions, hoping thereby to lead us on to death; for, like steps in a ladder, error leads to error, and sin to sin.

8. He tempted David merely to make a census,² knowing that God's protecting shield being removed from Israel, punishment would follow, for he delights in suffering. It is added, and "God smote Israel." But it is well known that God is frequently said to do in Scripture what he only permits to be done, for God cannot be the author of evil.³ Satan was the author of the plague, as he was of the sin, for it is said, "Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." But who, when a brother sins against him, or a ruler errs, recognises the occult influence of the real author, or says, "Satan

¹ Luke iv.

² 1 Chron. xxi.

³ "Whatever evil, sin, imperfection, disorder, may appear in history, or in the world, are not of God, but interpolations. God did not make sin, nor is he in any sense the author of it."—(*Dr Cumming's God in History*, p. 10.) See App. A, 5.

provoked him thereto?" Alas! language and the tongue are wholly in Error's sway, or, as Scripture hath it, they are "set on fire of hell." The large majority of sins are those of the tongue; hence, "by your words ye shall be judged, and by your words ye shall be condemned." Now, setting aside all blasphemies, all filthiness, all false, malevolent, mistaken, and uncharitable judgments of others, how much mere "foolish talking"¹ will have to be accounted for in that great day when the books are opened! Thus indissolubly to connect evil, and the Author of Evil, because Scripture does so, is not, as we shall find,² to minish aught from man's indwelling sin, but rather to render it of a deeper dye.

Error's invisible Agency. 9. In the beginning of Job we learn that the Spirit of Evil goes to and fro through the earth, and walks up and down in it. He is elsewhere described as a roaring lion, walking about seeking whom he may devour.³ We read of "Joshua, the high-priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him."⁴ The great apostle admits the same: "While I would do good, evil is present with me."⁵ He does not even despair of the righteous: "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat."⁶ "Lest by any means as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted

¹ Eph. v. 4.² Zech. iii. 1.—See Dan. x. 13.³ App. A, 33.⁴ Rom. vii. 21.⁵ 1 Pet. v. 8.⁶ Luke xxii. 31.

from the simplicity that is in Christ."¹ In the parable of the tares and wheat, the devil not only sows the tares, but "taketh away the word out of their hearts."

It is also written, "I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him, on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth and do so."²

We have this important narrative repeated in 2 Chron. xviii. 18-21. And it is an exact counterpart to the commissioned evil spirits of the second, third, and fourth seals. There are many similar references in Holy Writ, such as, "He sent evil angels among them."³ "The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him."⁴ We read, also, of Michael, the archangel, disputing with the Devil, and of the Angel of Judea being withstood by the Angel of Persia.⁵ It is likewise written, "There was war in heaven,—Michael and his angels fought against the Dragon and his angels."⁶

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 3. ² 1 Kings xxii. 19-22. ³ Ps. lxxviii. 49. ⁴ 1 Sam. xvi. 14.

⁵ Jeremy Taylor says, "The angel of Judea could not prevail in behalf of his people, because the angel of Persia opposed it." Dan. x. 13.

⁶ Apo. xii. 7.

God looses¹ the restraints of evil spirits, and bids them smite, as he did in Job's case and many others. He is not the author of the evil, he merely permits it, that he may evolve good from it, and punish disobedience by it.

10. The wisdom of the Spirit of Error far transcends that of man—hence we are told to have the wisdom of the serpent. It is only by having access to Christ's treasury, wherein "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,"² that we shall be able to withstand the Adversary. All other wisdom is foolishness to him, he bends it like twigs to his purposes; but before the wisdom that is in Christ, he quails and flees. Therefore, in its might, "resist the devil, and he will flee from you." "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you."

Satan knew and rightly applied the somewhat obscure prophecy of Ps. xci. 11. The spirits of evil knew our Lord, when men did not.³ They have even a certain knowledge of prophetic periods, which the Father has kept in his own hand. "Art thou come to torment us BEFORE THE TIME,"⁴ they say to our Lord. And we read,⁵ that the devil comes down to earth in great wrath, KNOWING that his time is short. Now, this fact which the devil knows, man overlooks, and denies in word and in deed; showing that man's wisdom, compared with the serpent's, is

¹ See Notes Apo. vii. 1-3; viii. ix. 14.

² Mark i. 24.

⁴ Matt. viii. 29.

³ Col. ii. 3.

⁵ Apo. xii. 12.

very limited. The number of the triune beast is 666. Here the dragon is hundreds, his false church tens, and man units. Possibly this may indicate their relative proportions.¹ We cannot exhaust Holy Writ. When ages yet unborn have concentrated all past and future knowledge upon it, there will still remain unexplored wonders in its deep.

Error's Consistency. 11. The consistency of the god of confusion² is very remarkable; and we shall hereafter see why, and how God forces him thereto. For instance: he is ever darkening the character and offices of the Redeemer. To reject, deny, conceal, obliterate, or in any degree injure the virtues of "that only Name under heaven by which men can be saved," is his constant end and aim, as seen in every heresy and error. In Moham-
medanism truth is darkened, by Judaic revery, tradition, and Arabic fiction. In Popery, Christianity is overlaid with paganism, tradition, revery, and fiction. While he is ever consistent in his ultimate aim, he is so frequently in his means. In the garden he assailed the weaker sex, tempted her to doubt, then to disobedience, and thereby leavened the whole lump with his own venom. When the false prophet

¹ Those who have not considered the vast teaching contained in all scriptural numbers, should consult Mr Fere's works on prophecy. Men are in the habit of terming deductions fanciful and far-fetched, which are beyond the range of their received opinions. As well might the drone term the honey of the working bee "far-fetched."

² God, we are told, is "not the author of confusion, but of peace."—(1 Cor. xiv. 33.) Error, or the god of this world, we learn from the second seal, takes away this peace from the earth, and substitutes confusion. Peace and godliness are synonyms.

Balaam caused Israel to stumble, nothing succeeded until he tried the daughters of Moab. Ancient writers frequently note the propagation of the early heresies by women.¹ And when France, given over by God to a reprobate mind" was to be corrupted, Voltaire, justly called Satan's amanuensis, specially aimed at corrupting the female sex, through his tract society and infidel agency.² The Semi-Romanism of our own country made, it is well known, its most marked progress among the female sex. Error well knows woman's mission, and her influence on society,—she, therefore, commonly is the object of his first and too often successful attack.

12. Cruelty is Error's' special delight. To seize the whole human race from Christ, and plunge them in the abyss of fire, which is his own portion, was his object in seducing Eve, and is so still. Nor is he satisfied with this; for, even in this life, his yoke is most oppressive, frequently driving his victims to prefer hell to this world, and to hurry themselves there by their own act. His cruel bondage is frequently alluded to in Scripture; hence, "we being burdened do groan."⁴ We read, too, of "all who were OPPRESSED of the Devil."⁵ When permitted to try God's servant, Job, cruelty in every form was practised by him. We find him even prevailing to

¹ In the Iconoclastic wars, image-worship was twice restored in the Eastern Church by the Emperesses Irene and Theodora.

² App. D. Proposition lv.

³ Short for "the Spirit of Error," here and throughout.

⁴ 2 Cor. v. 4.

⁵ Acts x. 38.

far shalt thou go, and no farther.”¹ Error tempts, suggests, harasses, stimulates, discourages, blinds, misleads, presents stumbling blocks and opportunities; “preaches smooth things, prophecies deceits.” He cannot force men to ruin; but he continuously and perseveringly allures them thereto. While, for the encouragement of the oppressed and fainting warrior, God assures us that, when “the Enemy rushes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.”²

14. The kingdom of Satan received a great check⁴ at our Lord’s first coming, typifying the issue of the second advent. Before his sufferings, our Saviour said, “Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the Prince of this world be cast out.”⁵ He had previously said, “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.”⁶

The words of Scripture need no confirmation. But it is remarkable that both heathen and Christian writers, in the early ages of the gospel, relate that the famous heathen oracles⁷ were struck dumb. The Delphic, they say, ceased to give answers from the birth of Christ. Several historians relate, that being questioned, it replied—“There is a Hebrew boy, who is king of the gods, who has commanded

¹ In Job’s case the limit was, “*but spare his life.*” Thus is Satan curbed, or, as the Destroyer, he would never cease to destroy.

² Isa. lix. 19.

³ “According to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”—(Phil. iii. 21.)

⁴ Col. ii. 15.

⁵ John xii. 31.

⁶ Luke x. 18.

⁷ St Paul terms these idols Devils, 1 Cor. x. 20. So, too, David, Ps. cvi. 37.

me to leave this house, and begone to hell ; so expect no more answers." Many heathen writers wrote much on the oracles being silenced, not knowing the cause ; and Plutarch's treatise thereon is still extant. Porphyry writes :—"It is no wonder if the city be overrun with sickness for so many years : Esculapius, and the rest of the gods, having withdrawn their converse from men ; for, since Jesus began to be worshipped, no man has received any public help or benefit from the gods." Porphyry, it is well known, was no believer in Christianity.

History teaches the self-same Lessons. 15. But God's teaching as to the Mystery of Iniquity, is not confined to Scripture. The few examples therein given, are illustrated again and again, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, reiterated and re-enacted in every page of history, in every daily paper, and in every hour's experience. Hence, EVERY allusion of Holy Writ to the Spirit of Error becomes, like all Scripture, a rule and ensample for yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Let us examine, then, a few of the prophecies of history, and of our hourly experience. Since the breach made in God's temple by the Enemy in Paradise, man has been saturated and steeped in error, or, as Scripture hath it, "the whole world lieth in wickedness."¹ His nature is wholly repugnant to truth ; even redeemed and renewed huma-

¹ Or, "in the wicked one," as many translate it.—(1 John v. 19.)

nity is slow to admit any truth. Our Lord says, "Oh, fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." All history proves that no truth, great or small, has been readily or well received by the world. And we find **EVEN THE APOSTLES UNABLE TO RECEIVE THE PLAINEST TRUTHS CONVEYED TO THEM BY OUR LORD IN THE PLAINEST LANGUAGE.**¹

Look to the reception which the God of Truth himself received! A robber was preferred before him. He was spitted on, was mocked, scourged, and made to bear his own cross, to wear a crown of thorns, to drink gall and vinegar, and finally was crucified between two thieves. And whence this treatment, but from the saturation of the world by the antagonistic Spirit of Error? Here, too, mark the consistency of Error: the sufferings of the Master have been re-enacted in his servants in all ages. The world has ever developed the same spirit against them that it displayed toward our Lord. Like Him, they have ever been as lambs for the slaughter; true to His service, they have not fought carnally, but they have died for the faith. Look at the missionary life in this our day! What is it but holy devotion to truth and to Christ, and mockery, defamation, and suffering, from Error and from Anti-christ—while, like their Lord, they love the world that hated them?

But let us turn to secular truth or science. Our Adversary, the God of Error, knows that knowledge

¹ Luke xviii. 31-34.

is the handmaid of religion ; therefore, so far as in him lies, he treats both alike. So that almost every new truth meets with the same opposition which divine truth itself experiences. All things are tending to the universal reign of Truth, whose kingdom shall never be destroyed. This onward march the Spirit of Error perseveringly opposes, disputing the ground inch by inch. Hence, in looking to history, we find that every discovery, every invention, every thing at all calculated to advance the state of man, and hasten the reign of truth, has been, and still is, opposed by the Spirit of Error, working in and through man. Take, for example, Moses' release of God's children from bondage, or take the building of the ark ; or take the history of Copernicus, Galileo, Columbus, and ten thousand others. Precisely the same spirit of opposition is manifest. Copernicus was satirised on the stage.¹ Galileo, for advancing his views, was imprisoned by the Inquisition. Both were denounced as holding doctrines contrary to Scripture ; and so strong was the popular belief in

¹ Error rarely offers manly and straightforward opposition : of this, his instruments are incapable—hence derision is his favourite weapon.

The ancient philosophers could not, owing to this constant conflict of Error, disclose new truths to the public : hence their well-known practice of communicating them only to their friends. Copernicus intended imitating them in this respect, and kept back his discovery thirty-six years. He was at length induced to publish, and his immediate death is said to "have been caused by the anxiety and terror, from the offence which he knew he would give to his countrymen, who are always sure to deny what is new, though it be ever so reasonable and well-grounded ; and to persecute the author of novelties to the utmost of their power"—(*Biographical Dictionary*, vol. iv.) And although we are not now in the dark ages, we see the same spirit constantly at work around us, though ever varying its hues. The Spirit of Error, in a myriad forms, wages an incessant warfare against Truth, and will do so until Error is chained in the abyss.

the quiescence of the earth, that Galileo long withheld the truth, and when he propounded it, was enjoined by the Romish Church not to teach the Copernican doctrine of the motion of the earth. His "Dialogues on Motion," though believed by himself to be incapable of annoying the "holy officer," he could not, owing to the terror which it inspired, print for many years. Many of his works are said to have been destroyed, on his death, by his relatives, at the instigation of the family confessor. In 1609, the Galilean telescope was first applied to astronomy. Even for this discovery he was assailed. Some would not look through his glass, preferring ignorant derision to candid inquiry. Others, equally blinded, said that they looked, and could see nothing. Others "thought it odd that Nature should give satellites to Jupiter simply to ennoble the Medici family,"—Galileo having called them Medicean stars after his patron. This history is an exact illustration of all kindred ones; and to each and every eminent disciple of truth, we might say, "*mutato nomine de te fabula narratur.*"

Printing was discovered, and "the rulers of darkness" perceived that it must sap their battlements and towers; hence it was instantly opposed,¹ and deemed the work of the Devil. Whereas, printing was from God; its antagonism,² from Satan. The proverbial saying is well known:—"The Pope must destroy printing, or printing will destroy him."

¹ In the East the first press was seized and destroyed.

² Satan, *i.e.*, the Antagonist.

Hence the *Index Expurgatorius*. That Satan has used and abused the press, is nothing against it ; for this he does with every truth.

But the operation of the Spirit of Error is not confined to one church or hemisphere. It is everywhere discernible alike in the past, present, and future. Time would fail to tell of all the popular errors that have existed, and do now exist, in our own country, homes, and hearts. And whence come they but from the Father of Error ? The laws of the kingdom of Error are not of fitful, but of universal application, and matters great and small are equally subject to them. Hence, when inoculation was introduced from the East, it was violently opposed in England. When the new style was adopted, though proved necessary by mathematicians and astronomers, it met with most violent hindrance and opposition, and with us led to riotous mobs, whose ignorant cry was, "Give us back the twelve days we have lost." In scriptural language, "Satan hindered it," as he did St Paul's journey.

Take, again, Harvey's great discovery of the circulation of the blood,—a doctrine founded on such obvious and plain facts, that he who now denied it would be deemed insane. Yet the discoverer was persecuted and mocked, and his truth denied and derided. "Many learned doctors rejected it till their dying day,"¹ and "not one above forty years of age believed it."² Their hearts were ossified to truth, and they could not receive the most obvious and the plainest. Like the apostles, Error blinded them to the plainest

¹ Dr Gregory.

² Dr E. Johnston.

truth, set forth on the plainest and surest evidence.

Transition una-
voidable.

The reader will, we trust, pardon our abrupt transitions to subjects apparently the most diverse. The laws of Evil, like those of Good, are universal. Their field is the world. The subject, therefore, of this paper is vast, and its limits narrow. The instances adduced are merely indices of all kindred ones—they are meant to point the way of thought, not to make and finish it. The more diverse, therefore, our examples, the wider their range of illustration. Diversity, too, is inseparable from Error, whose hues are ever varying, though its nature remains unchanged. Whoever has watched theameleon gliding stealthily and subtly along the earth—changing its hues with each change of position, the better to conceal itself and deceive others—now green, now brown, now light, now dark—ever differing, yet ever the same—ever changing, yet ever agreeing with the shades of the surrounding material—has seen an exact illustration of the Spirit of Error as it steals along the four quarters of the earth, and through the hearts of men. It is well said, “The power of sin, which entered in the beginning, casts itself into a thousand forms, lifts itself in enmity against God, moulds the fallen creatures of God into endless shapes of provocation, and wages a perpetual rebellion.” “What is the history of the world, but a history of man’s warfare against God?”

But to return. The key to the above hostility to

truth surely lies in the fact that the God of Error and Father of Lies opposes, through his myriad instruments, ALL TRUTH; and the Father of Cruelty hates every thing tending to lessen cruelty, or hasten that, to him, dreaded time when they shall not HURT nor destroy in all God's holy mountain.

We might, did time permit, greatly extend our illustrations. A perfect history of the progress of all truths, all discoveries, all inventions, and all works, in any wise tending to hasten the empire of Truth, or advance the state of man, would but disclose from first to last the same Spirit of Error, opposing, abusing, and counterfeiting. Nor does it lessen man's guilt therein, that from this opposition God evolves good. Each truth thereby undergoes, it is true, a more fiery ordeal, and comes out of it like refined gold, because "Truth conquering shall conquer." But it behoves each of us to look well to it, lest, while we are only exercising, as we believe, a judicious opposition to novelty and innovation, we be not in reality "performing the lusts of the Devil," and unwittingly taking part with him against the cause of Truth. Daniel told us that, in our day, knowledge should increase; we are therefore warned to expect novelty. Whether that novelty belong to Truth or to Error, we can, by taking Scripture as our standard, and God as our guide, readily determine; and if to Truth, it is at our peril that we oppose it.

The history of all early science is but the history of the war waged by Error against Truth. The strife assumes different hues, but the cameleon-like spirit

is the same. Generally the sons of Error deride, abuse, and pervert the discovery, and the timid and indolent sons of Truth are induced to think it anti-scriptural, and to shun it. The power of Truth at length convinces men that each item of science does but add another buttress to Truth. It is this that engenders the hatred of Error to ALL KNOWLEDGE; every particle thereof goes to aid in building up the great temple of Truth, and therefore every particle thereof he counteracts and opposes, disputing the ground literally inch by inch with Christ. And we have only to observe, in any circle, who are the opponents of the many new truths—which, in evidence of Daniel's prophecy, are daily springing up around us—to find that they are invariably the ignorant and the Error-bound, with whom to doubt is easy, to analyse impossible. These are the instruments of the Adversary's war with Truth; and we may lay it down as an unvarying rule, that ignorance and opposition to Truth are necessary concomitants. What a key have we here to the Apostasy's all-prevailing love of ignorance! The press, the Bible,¹ all know-

¹ In the Encyclical Letter of Pope Leo XII., May 1824, the Scriptures translated into the vulgar tongue are styled "*Poisonous pastures*." And this expression is applied to Holy Writ by one who styles and believes himself God's high-priest. Yet, of this erring high-priest, Cardinal Bellarmine declares, "If the Pope should so far err as to command vices and prohibit virtues, the church would be *bound to believe that vices are good*, and virtues evil, unless she will sin against her conscience." Hence the Church of Rome must believe the vernacular Scriptures to be poisonous pastures, or be guilty of that worst of crimes, want of faith in the church and her head! "If the church of Rome) defines to be black that which to our eyes appears white, we *must affirm it to be black*."—(*Exercitia Spiritualia, Ignatius Loyola*.) Hence the whole Church of Rome must affirm God's Holy Word, in the vulgar tongue, to be "poisonous pastures," or be guilty of heresy. See, also, *Exercises of St Ignatius*, by Nicholas Wiseman, p. 180.

ledge,¹ and all science are hateful to her, on whose forehead is written, "Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth."

And if leaving history, we come to persons,² we find

¹ The Apostasy's love of ignorance and hatred of light, is daily exhibited even in this age, as will appear in various parts of this work, especially in the Pope's bulls fulminated against our Bible societies. Lord Clarendon, in his letter, dated 2d December 1850, to Lord Shrewsbury, writing of the Romish Primate of Ireland, says—"Dr Cullen's only object has been to destroy the colleges established by the legislature, and maintained by the state, and to extinguish the national schools, in which 500,000 of the poorest classes are educated, without an attempt to provide for establishments of these two kinds, and thus leaving the middle and poorest classes in brutal ignorance." "There is more rank communism in Dr Cullen's synodical address, than could be chemically distilled from M. De Vericour's whole book." Thus, alas! are the Apostasy whetting a sword for their own necks! So identically connected is Rome with ignorance, that "scholar" is one of the terms of reproach commonly applied to converts to truth! In the Pope's Encyclical Letter of 1832, he says, "The maxim that liberty of conscience is to be secured to all, is at once absurd and erroneous, or rather a delirious extravagance. The liberty of the press is a monstrous evil, and to be regarded with horror." "All association between men of different creeds ought to be proscribed." Lord Clarendon, in the letter quoted above, says, "Their object seems to be, that between Papist and Protestant goodwill should not exist." It was lately remarked in the House, that the *Index Expurgatorius* would eliminate from our literature all our divinity, and some of our greatest poets and historians. "Nothing was too large or too small for the Romish Church, as if men were children in nurseries, and to be kept from all mental food. All our writers on natural theology and on the evidences of Christianity were excluded—even Bishop Bull, whom they quoted. So of political economy. Jeremy Bentham was forbidden, so were Hume's Essays. In history, Hume was tolerated because of his Stuart leanings; but Robertson and Hallam were proscribed. In science, even Chambers's Dictionary of Science and Art was prohibited; so was Locke on the Understanding, and, of course, Descartes; so, too, the Dairyman's Daughter!" "Ignorance is the mother of devotion," was the memorable exclamation of one of Rome's arch-champions; and though she may not own this creed, such is her practice. And what shall we say of her garbling of the Decalogue!—written with God's own finger—containing the "whole duty of man"—on which "hang all the law and the prophets!" This revelation, Rome in her popular manuals of instruction mutilates! A church "having a mission from above, never could keep whole nations in ignorance of the genuine ten commandments."—(*Soames on the Romish Decalogue*).

² "I see a law in my members warring against the law of my mind."—(Rom. vii. 23).

precisely the same law of Error warring against Truth; and this not simply from pole to pole, but from head to heart. Let any man but follow Truth earnestly, and Satan will strive to find for every effort some counteracting agent. Every observant warrior of Truth has more or less experienced this. And why, but because "the Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?"¹

15. An eminent living divine, though with another object, bears witness to our position. "No man ever did any thing that was good, without meeting with terrible obstructions." "It is when the noblest deeds are done, and the holiest lessons taught, that the greatest persecution breaks forth." And why is this, but that all the foundations of the earth are out of course, and Error sways the hearts of men?

But the first and best study of good and evil is that afforded by our own hearts. There we see the same "law in our members, warring against the law of our minds, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin which is in our members." There, too, we find a law that "when we would do good, evil is present with us: so that with the mind, we ourselves serve the law of God; but with the flesh, the law of sin."² Having on this best field exercised our senses to discern between good and evil, every additional item of self-knowledge will prove a step to the right discernment of those same laws as exhibited throughout the universe.

¹ James iv. 5.

² Rom. vii. 21-25.

Of evil working *against* men, we have endless instances. Let us hastily glance at one of evil working *in* men ; and take that almost universal genius, Leibnitz, to whom "every thing difficult was easy," and who failed only "in the ambition of universal conquest."¹ He maintained the doctrine of God's "pre-established harmony." This was a truth ; but the great Adversary of all Truth immediately prevailed to darken it with Error ; and we find this great philosopher unwittingly yielding himself up to the service of Error, and while admitting God's pre-established harmony, disallowing any subsequent divine agency, save in the case of a miracle ! But God's agency is as apparent in every breath we breathe, as in the Creation : hence Bacon, Newton, and others, admitting Leibnitz' premises, hold also God's continuous agency.

Men are often scared from truth, by the error which has seemed to flow from it. But the error is not the result of the truth, any more than the tares are the result of the wheat. The Enemy places it there in hopes of darkening the truth, and driving men from it. Were we to reject truth, because erring man, doing the lusts of his father, has overlaid it with error, we should reject all truth, because it is the Adversary's unceasing aim to overlay and confound every truth with some counteracting and neutralising error.

Leibnitz also held the Platonist theory of Optimism, the obvious result of his not clinging closely

¹ Gibbon.

to Holy Writ, and not understanding the great counter mystery of Error, for no one in any degree acquainted therewith could be an optimist.

Not only do we find the splendid genius of Leibnitz falling an easy prey to the devices of the Spirit of Error; but we see precisely the same throughout the German philosophy, both in metaphysics and ethics. The superiority of the German mind in power, erudition, depth, is unquestioned; but it bends like a twig before the mystery of Error: hence the confused blending of Truth and Error which is the main characteristic of the German school, as well as of the Roman, Moslem, and all other heresies, whether at home or abroad.

From these facts, then, we learn that the most towering intellect and fullest erudition are but ropes of sand to the "rulers of darkness," unless strengthened by union with Him "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."¹

Error's Mimic-
ry and Counter
Strategy of Truth. 16. But the most important feature amid the vast tactics of Error, is its frequent mimicry of Truth. For every act of Truth, Error has a counteract, and, where he can, a counterfeit.

In proof thereof we adduce the following instances, which, though numerous, are only a fraction of what might be given.

The Spirit of Error admits this mimicry, for he says, "I will be like the Most High."² And we find

¹ Col. ii. 3.

² Isa. xiv. 14.

him putting this impious threat into execution throughout history and Holy Writ: and not the father of Error only, but the sons of Error also; for our Saviour said of them, "The lusts of your father ye will do." Every one acquainted with the history of Leo X., and other of the Popes, know that they are ever imitating the Most High, and arrogating to themselves His attributes, prerogatives, power, and language. They claim to be King of kings, in opposition to Him who is indeed King of kings and Lord of lords.¹ When crowned, it is said, "Know thyself Father of Kings and Princes, Ruler of the world." Rome claims sanctity, unity, and universal supremacy—to be infallible, indefectible, eternal, the mother and mistress of churches. Her head is called "Universal Pastor," "Father of the Faithful," "Ruler of the World," "Supreme Judge," "Centre of Unity."

Our Saviour is termed in Scripture, "the bright and morning star." Satan also assumes to be a star,² and Jude terms his executive "wandering stars."

Our Saviour is frequently termed the Angel. In Rev. x., he appears as a mighty angel with a rainbow on his head. He is emphatically the Angel of Light. Satan delights to mimic this form, so do his followers. "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ: and no marvel, for Satan is transformed into an angel of light; therefore it is no great thing if

¹ "The Papacy," pp. 100-115.

² Isa. xiv. 14. The Gnostics termed themselves stars.

his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness.”¹

Christ is ever imparting to man wisdom from on high: Satan is ever feeding his flock with the wisdom of the serpent from the abyss.

God is “the Father” of the children of obedience. Satan “the father”² of the children of disobedience:

Our Saviour is the High-Priest: Pagan and Papal Rome have their mimic high-priest or Pontifex Maximus; while Mahomet and his line are also high-priests.

The thunders of God are repeatedly mentioned in Holy Writ: Jupiter and the Popes have their mimic “thunders.”

17. God, we are told, “changeth times and seasons:”³ Error “thinketh to change⁴ times.” And it is the peculiar mark of the arch-Apostasy that it changeth times and laws, and even gives its own feast⁵ days the preference to God’s Sabbath.

We read of the deep things⁶ of God: Satan also has his deep things.⁷

Christ has his synagogue and church: so has Error.⁸

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 13-15.

² John viii. 44.—He is termed “the Spirit which now worketh in the children of disobedience.”—(Eph. ii. 2.)

³ Dan. ii. 21.

⁴ Dan. vii. 25.

⁵ Instead of the commandment, “Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image;” Romish catechisms read, “Thou shalt not take the name of God in vain.” And instead of “Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day;” “Remember to sanctify the feast days.”—(See “Facts from Rome,” pp 90, 106: where literal translations of the Romish catechisms are given.)

⁶ 1 Cor. ii. 10.

⁷ Apo. ii. 24.

⁸ Apo. ii. 9, and third seal.

Our Lord has a "great sword:"¹ so has the Dragon.²

Truth has two lines of witnesses:³ so has Error, the Eastern and Western Antichrists, with their subordinate streams.⁴ The former bring down fire⁵ from heaven; so do the latter.⁶

Truth has a yoke which is easy: Error has a counter-yoke, which is burdensome.⁷

We read, too, of "the cup of the Lord and the cup of Devils; of the table of the Lord and the table of Devils;" of Christ's seat and of Satan's seat.⁹

Truth has its triumphs, as set forth in the first seal: Error has his, but "the triumphing of the wicked is short."

Error's great masterpiece, Antichrist, is but a mimicry of Christ. Some argue that "anti" means "opposed to." But antitype does not mean opposed to the type, but like the type. Homer, in terming

¹ Isa. xxvii. 1.

² Apo. vi. 4.

³ Apo. xi. 3.

⁴ Thomas Aquinas is the great angel of the Dominicans—the chief agents with the Jesuits of the "Holy Inquisition." The Dominicans swear to follow the theological and philological views of Thomas Aquinas. At present they and the Jesuits divide the Church of Rome. Those who are not Jesuits or Molinists are Dominicans or Thomasines. Other schools are little known, having scarcely any followers beyond the immediate establishments: such as Benedictines, Augustines, Carmelites, and others. Are not these the feeders of the Church of Error, the mimic witnesses of the Spirit of Evil?—(see chapter xi.);—and is there not an evident reference to these false witnesses, in the two horns of the lamb-like beast of chapter xiii.? The Æons of the Gnostics also are mimic witnesses. They were deemed conduits of life from the first source to all others. Christ they considered as a higher Æon, Jesus as an inferior one.

⁵ Apo. xi. 5; viii. 5, Notes.

⁶ Apo. xiii. 13.

⁷ Third seal.

⁸ 1 Cor. x. 21.

⁹ Ps. lxxxix. 39, Prayer-book version. Apo. ii. 13.

¹⁰ "Even now there are many Antichrists."—(1 John ii. 18.) The final Antichrist is yet to come.

his heroes Anti-Leon and Anti-Theos, did not mean that they were opposed to lions and to God, but that they were LION-LIKE, and GOD-LIKE. So Antichrist is CHRIST-LIKE.

Truth has legions of angels or ministering spirits, who constitute its invisible agency or executive. Error has his legions or ministering spirits, who constitute his counter invisible executive. Corresponding with the former, Truth has a visible executive on earth—the sons of Truth, who act as they are “moved by the Holy Spirit.” Corresponding with the latter, Error has his visible executive—the sons of disobedience, who act as they are moved by the triune Spirit of Error.—See second, third, and fourth seals.

Truth has his war-horses : so has Error.

The children of Truth are marked or sealed :¹ Error also marks or seals his flock.²

Possibly the Dragon's ten horns are his antidecalogue : his whip to drive men into his church ; at least, he so used and uses them.

18. Our Saviour is described as a lamb : Error, therefore, assumes a lamb-like³ form. Of this spirit and his agents, our Lord warned the church when he said, “Beware of them that come unto you in sheep's clothing, but within are ravening wolves.” Christ is called “the image of God.”⁴ Antichrist, therefore, has his counter image.⁵ Christ has the

¹ Apo. vii.

² Apo. xiii. 16.

³ Apo. xiii. 11.

⁴ 2 Cor. iv. 1-6.

⁵ Apo. xiii.

keys of death and hell:¹ so has Antichrist.² Christ gave them to the true church: Error to the false.

19. It is the constant desire of Christ to set up His empire in man's heart. "I stand at the door and knock," says our Lord; "if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."³ His desire is, that we should become temples of the Holy Ghost, fitted for His throne, that He may dwell in us and we in Him: and to this end He says, "I and my Father work."

In like manner, Satan aims at having his "seat"⁴ in every man's heart. To this end he perseveringly works; and we learn from Scripture and our every day's experience, that he frequently takes possession. We deem demoniacal possession to have ceased, because it is quieter in its operation, and invisible to the natural eye. But perhaps it is on this account only the more subtle and deadly. In whatever heart Christ is not, there is "Satan's seat," and there is possession. Cain signifies "possession." Eve seems to have thought that she had gotten the promised seed. But Cain was the possession of the Spirit of Evil—the head of his inheritance—the apostasy. "Cain was of that wicked One;" and not Cain only;

¹ Apo. i. 8.

² Apo. ix.

³ Apo. iii. 20.

⁴ Apo. ii. 13.

"The deepest truths," it has been observed, "lie always nearest to the deepest heresies, as the greatest lights ever have beside them the deepest and darkest shadows."—(*Voices of the Dead*, p. 451.) This fact is explained by the counterworking of Error. We find, too, in history that the pure eras of the church were succeeded by those of heresy: the eras of Reformation by those of Infidelity.

for we read, "He that committeth sin is of the Devil."¹

20. We read much of God's life-giving streams, but the God of Error has his counter rivers² of gall and wormwood. But to leave generalities and descend for a moment into particulars, the prayerful, thoughtful, and believing Christian will find, on minutely and attentively examining his own heart and life, that so far as the God of Error is permitted, he has, or attempts, a counter and neutralising act for every act of Deity. And each must exclaim with St Paul, "When I would do good, EVIL is present with me." He has made but little progress in the Christian warfare, who has not recognised that occult influence "dwelling in him," which leads him "to do that which he hates," and to exclaim with the apostle, "Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"³

¹ 1 John iii. 8.

² Apo. viii., Notes.

See how the infamous Tetzels, the Pope's chief agent in collecting funds for building St Peters, imitates Truth. "The grace of God is at your gates," he proclaimed as he approached each city with his spiritual merchandise. This was almost a literal imitation of Christ's words, "I stand at the door and knock." In his addresses, he said, "Christ has resigned all power to the Pope—he no longer acts as God." "Happy are the eyes that see the things that ye see." "By the Pope's letter, all sins past and future, alike of the living and the dead, are remitted to you. So soon as the money sounds in the receiving box, the soul of the purchaser's relative flies from purgatory to heaven. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. I shall soon shut the gate of heaven, and how shall they escape who neglect so great salvation?"—(*Daubigné*, i. 230–250) A more diabolical parody of Holy Writ, it is impossible to conceive. Yet the end, here as elsewhere, justified the means. From this infamy, God brought the Reformation: and thus we find Error and all his agents, made unconscious instruments in the hands of the Almighty for evolving his righteous ends.

³ Rom. vii. 24. Some of our readers may have observed in themselves or others

Error's Counter Trinity. 21. The Spirit of Truth is triune. Error, therefore, has his mock trinity, composed of the Dragon, the Beast, and False Prophet.

Mahommedanism has its trinity, so has Hinduism. Mahomet is prophet, priest, and king, like our Lord; and his capital is called Salem, the City of Peace, the mimic Zion. The Pope is also prophet, priest, and king. Originally he was "Bishop of Rome, Primate of Italy, and Apostle of the West."¹ Our Saviour is the Lion of the tribe of Judah: both the eastern and western Antichrist adopt the title;² while Satan is himself termed a Lion.³ The badge of the eastern Antichrist is three tails. The badge of the Pope is the tiara or three crowns, and his patrimony, called St Peter, is composed of three states.

22. The number three traced throughout history, from the three days' darkness in the land of Egypt, down to the many three days' massacres in the streets of Paris, would alone suffice to convince us that Scripture and history are cyclical. And very marvellous it is to observe how this triplicity reigns not only throughout history, but throughout Scripture and a twofold character. The fact is only explicable by the chapter before us. When one phase of character is apparent, Truth is dominant; when the other, Error.

¹ Gibbon.

Of the petition in our Lord's prayer, the Rev. J. N. Coleman says, "I should much prefer the translation, 'Deliver us from the Evil One.' It is the same thing to pray for deliverance from the Evil One, as it is to pray for deliverance from that evil of which he is the author and cause." &

² At the Lateran Council, Pope Leo X. was hailed with, "Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah cometh!" At the last Lateran Council, he was addressed by the Archbishop of Patraca with, "All power in heaven and in earth is committed unto you."

³ 1 Pet. v. 8.

nature.¹ God has three great means of instruction—the book of his Word; the book of Nature; the book of History;—and the more they are studied together, the more perfect their harmony will appear.

Contrasts of Truth and Error. 23. Holy Writ tells us, that “without shedding of blood there is no remission.” And in mimicry thereof, the idols throughout heathendom are smeared all over with vermilion; while the peculiar colour of the Spirit of Evil is red, for he is described as the great red dragon: and it is well known that red is as conspicuous in the apostate church as in heathen mythology. And the better to illustrate the constant antagonism of Truth and Error, where there is not counterfeit, there is contrast. Thus, our Lord is termed the Prince of Life: Error, the Prince of Death. Thus *το αρνιον*, the Lamb—and not *αμνος*, as always in St John’s Gospel—is ever used in the Apocalypse to contrast with *το θηριον*, the Beast. Then we have *η πορνη και το θηριον*, the Harlot and the Beast, in contrast with *η νυμφη και το αρνιον*, the Bride and the Lamb. Such contrasts abound in Holy Writ. Thus we read of the Powers of light and the Powers of darkness, the Holy City and the antagonistic Great City. Error is our accuser day and night before God:² Truth, “our advocate, ever making intercession for us.”³ The Woman clothed with the sun, is the true church—her antagonist, the Woman clothed in scarlet, the false church. Truth is lamb-like; so

¹ See App. E.

² Apo. xii. 9

³ 1 John ii. 1, and Heb. vii. 25.

is Error. Truth has its four beasts; so has Error. God veils Truth that it may be made known in due time: Error veils Truth, that it may never be known. God is the Power of health and of renewal: "Behold, I make all things new." His work is our renewal in body, soul, and spirit to the image of God. Error is the Power of death, temporal¹ and spiritual,² and his aim is to liken us to his counter image.³ Truth has its "mystery;" Error has its counter "mystery." In the former, God humbled himself as man; in the latter, man exalted himself as God.

24. Here we begin to see something of what Scripture terms "the depths of Satan." Imitation of, and approximation to, Truth is at once his rule and his strength. By counterfeiting Truth, he brings contempt thereon, and so confounds Truth and Error, that ignorance cannot distinguish between them. Hence his intense love of ignorance, and hatred of knowledge. §

Error's War 25. There is no more popular argument than that the study of prophecy has been so abused, that it is better to have nothing to do with it, and that where all is doubt and discordance, inquiry is useless, if not positively wrong.

But if the Spirit of Error working in man has opposed or darkened any truth, we may feel sure that that truth is one of most vital importance; and

¹ Heb. ii. 14.

² 2 Cor. iv. 4.

³ Apo. xiii. 15; 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10.

we should cling to it the closer, in proportion to the intensity of the mists which Error flings around it. The Apocalypse is the unveiling of the Spirit of Error, in his war with Truth. In it the "Mystery of Iniquity" stands forth in all its hideous and naked deformity. This is what he especially dreads, for in concealment and in counterfeit lies his strength. We need not therefore be surprised that he has successfully striven to impede the study and understanding of Revelation; that he should have more especially veiled his own three seals; that he has through his agents, the Popes, prohibited the study of the Apocalypse; and, through Leo X., even all mention of Antichrist. Failing these, he has, by spreading dissension in the camp of Truth, brought discredit on prophecy, and wellnigh persuaded men that its study is vain and useless.

Error often anticipates Truth. 26. One very remarkable feature in the tactics of the Adversary is, that he not only has a counter act and strategy for each one of Truth, but he even frequently *anticipates* Truth. Thus he set up his universal or catholic church and state, *in anticipation* of Christ's universal kingdom. And we find Scripture following the same order; for, in Apo. ix., the triune Antichrist appears on the stage to claim universal dominion; and in the next chapter our Lord appears to assert his, and to assure the church that the councils of hell shall not prevail. The former comes in the clouds of hell; the latter, in the clouds of heaven. In chapter ix., Error

so fills his temple with smoke, that the sun and air are darkened by it; while in chapter xv., God's temple is filled with the smoke of His glory.

Other instances from Scripture might be given, and we find precisely the same in history. "The Enemy" had his press, and his missionaries, and tract societies, and had corrupted France¹ by these means *before*—to our shame be it spoken—similar efforts were made in England in the cause of Truth.

"The Adversary" expected "the Sun of Righteousness," his dreaded foe, and therefore he gave the heathen a mimic sun, well known as "Dominus Sol." Now, the first day of every week was dedicated to this God; hence our Sunday.² And what is still more remarkable, the birthday of the heathen deity, the mock sun, was celebrated on the 25th December, our Christmas Day! And this in anticipation,—showing, as does Scripture, the prescience of Evil.³ To deem this and like facts mere coincidences, were to acknowledge ourselves in the bonds of Error, for we find them the rule, and not the exception.

27. How clearly in the present day is the Adversary anticipating the millennium! Communism, Socialism, and other unclean spirits⁴ now abroad, have

¹ App. B, Pro. lv.

² The term was a compromise of Constantine's in ordaining the observance of the Sabbath. The name Pagan—the institute Christian.

³ App. A, 10, where his foreknowledge is intimated.

⁴ However apparently diverse, they have all one common principle—that of levelling. Their aim is to bring down the mountains and exalt the valleys of society.

been justly termed "the Devil's millennium." The *Critic* for June 1851, says, "In the manufacturing districts, it was not merely an age of emancipation, but a prelude of a millennium, in which the working classes were to enter into the full heritage of enjoyment, of which tyranny, and injustice, and bad laws had robbed them." At the Reformation, also, the church expecting the millennium, Error then, as now, raised its mimic cry: "No tribute! all things in common! no tithes! no magistrates!"¹

It is not a little remarkable, that the Hindus, Mahometans, and others in Asia, are now, like the inhabitants of Europe, expecting a millennium: not the true, but the mock! This sympathy throughout the Church of Error is often apparent, and might alone convince us of the vast power of the Enemy.² Thus, when the eastern and western Antichrists were set up by him in Europe, both Hinduism and Buddhism received at the same time a fresh impulse and a new life. And the four were but old errors, in new and improved attire. Nothing can explain these facts, save the words of Scripture which style Error the prince of the power of the air, and the spirit of this world. Here, too, we perhaps have a clue to the fact, that in 1848 revolution blazed in distant capitals and kingdoms of Europe on the same day, as if conveyed from one to the other by the electric wires of hell.

28. The tendency of Truth is ever to unity. God

¹ Milner.

² He is described as "deceiving the nations in the four quarters of the earth, and gathering them to battle."—(Apo. xii. 9; xx. 8.)

is love, and perfect love is perfect unity. It may be safe to say that wherever there is not perfect unity, there is not perfect Truth. When Error is chained in the abyss, unity will prevail; he is the author of disunion, schism, and controversy. It was for this union that our Lord prayed, "That they all may be one;" "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one."¹ That there is a tendency in the present age to unity, even infidels admit. History, science, poetry, invention, philosophy, are all aiding its development; while the means of inter-communion have been miraculously increased. But, above all, religion is making vast and hitherto unknown efforts towards gathering men into their one eternal home.

This onward tendency in the empire of Truth, the keen-eyed Spirit of Evil views with jealousy, impedes and counterfeits;—in the world, by rebellion, revolution, and war; in the church, by schism and controversy; and in society, by wounding that love which is the cornerstone of union, by harsh and erroneous judgments, pseudo-charity, calumny,² and lies. Love to God and our neighbour is the Spirit of Truth: self-love is the Spirit of Error. And from the rarity of the former, and the prevalence of the latter, we again learn how greatly Error sways the heart of man. Communism, and its many kindred philosophies, falsely so called, are but the Adversary's attempt to imitate *anticipatively* that union to which all things are tending; while a mock unity is the great

¹ John xvii. 21, 23.

² *Διόβολος*, the calumniator.

boast of the apostate church,—and justly so, for Error, however multiform and cameleon-like, is ever one in its aim and end—hostility to Truth. In the three seals of Error, we have this mock unity clearly portrayed.

29. Satan, by his temptation, “All these things will I give thee,” tried to make our Saviour his vassal, and the supreme Lord of the world. Failing with God, he succeeded with man, and made the Pope so. But it is curious to observe that, after this failure, our Lord received, at the Adversary’s hands, almost the identical treatment which he himself ultimately meets with from the armies of Truth.¹ Satan is then led captive by the powers of light, descends into hell, is laid in the lowest pit, chained and bound in darkness and in the deep ; shut up and sealed. In like manner was our Lord led captive by the powers of darkness, “descended into hell,”² was chained and bound by the power of death, was “laid in the lowest pit, in darkness, and in the deep ;”³ was shut up and sealed. This, too, by anticipation.

Error’s Counter Symbols. 30. The Spirit of Truth has filled the temple of nature with symbols,⁴ so veiled as to be discernible only to the eye of faith ; and by this arrangement, while idolatry is prevented, faith is fed and nourished. But in mimicry thereof, the Adversary has filled his synagogue with legions of effigies, stocks, stones, images,

¹ Apo. xx. 1-3.

² The Apostles’ Creed.

³ Ps. lxxxviii. 6.

⁴ “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.”—(Rom. i. 20.)

and pictures, which are suited to enchain the material heart, and blind the natural eye.¹ And thus he unceasingly so confounds all things holy with his counterfeits, that poor erring man, who loveth a lie,² is more readily lured by the latter than the former. God's symbols destroy idolatry, foster faith, and through the visible depict the invisible. The mimic symbols of the Enemy feed idolatry, destroy faith, and chain the senses to the visible. Yet Truth and Error are here, as elsewhere, so confounded by the subtle Adversary, that nothing but the light of God can lead men through the mist; while the majority follow the mimic light, because Error sways the hearts of men.

Error's Counter
Sway.

31. We learn from Daniel³ that
Christ shall break the golden image

¹ Notes Apo. iv. 6, on four beasts.

² Apo. xxii. 15.

³ Dan. ii. 31-45.

We often lose much teaching by inaccuracy of observation and language. The word tare, for instance, we usually apply to the vetch. Now, the vetch bears no resemblance to wheat, and our Lord's parable, were the vetch meant, is barely intelligible. But the tare of the parable is known by botanists to be the darnel—a noxious plant “sown by the Enemy,” growing generally among wheat, and so closely resembling it, that it is almost impossible to separate the one from the other; while the separation of the vetch tare from wheat is attended with no sort of difficulty. The darnel, however, is of the same size as wheat, and “its leaves are so like the corn among which they grow, as not to be distinguished from it until the ear is formed.”—(*Botanical Rambles*, by Rev. D. A. Johns.) The darnel is in fact COUNTERFEIT WHEAT; and we herein see precisely the same laws regulating the chair of St Peter and the tares of the field. For “Popery is but a mighty counterfeit of the gospel.”—(*The Papacy*, by Rev. J. A. Wylie, pp. 18-55.)

We find throughout Scripture and history that counterfeit is the Adversary's aim. But we also know that God uses the seen to depict the unseen—(Rom. i. 20.) Although, therefore, the remark may seem premature, we think it will hereafter be found that the imitation of Truth by Error extends from the visible to the invisible, and that Scripture largely teaches the mystery of Error by this implied contrast. App. A, 23.

of the world's empire to pieces, and set up a kingdom which shall fill the whole earth and never be destroyed. "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth."¹ Now, the history of the Roman Church from her fall² has been to set up anticipatively a counter catholic sway. This great device of the Adversary is visible in every page of Rome's history; and even her own children unconsciously bear evidence to it. "In the beginning of the twelfth century, the Provost Gerohus ventured to say, 'It will at last come to this, that the golden image of the empire shall be shaken to dust; every great monarchy shall be divided into tetrarchates, and then only will the church stand free and untrammelled beneath the protection of her crowned High-Priest.'"³ And here we have a further instance of the consistency of Error. The Pagan Alexander sought universal sway, and the honour due to the Most High. The Papal Powers have done so, and the Infidel Powers will do so.⁴

But, inasmuch as we may descend from nations to persons, and find God's laws applicable to all, so may we descend from histories to words, and find the rule unchanged. The word *πρῶτον* occurs twenty-four times in the Apocalypse; in twelve, it designates the

¹ Ps. lxxii. 8.

² What she was before her fall, we read in the first chapter of Romans.

³ Ranke's History of the Popes, vol. i. p. 22.

⁴ Among other instances, we may note the consistency of the efforts made by Error and his agents to destroy not only our Lord in infancy, but his heralds, or types,—such as Moses, Joseph, Cyrus, David. For in all we find "the Dragon standing to devour the woman's offspring as soon as it was born."—(Apo. xii. 4.)

adoration paid in the temple of Truth; and in twelve, the counter adoration paid by the "synagogue of Satan." Revelation is full of such contrasts, as if specially to mark Error's constant imitation of Truth; while its structure is that of mathematical precision.

The tactics of Error, then, consist in a disguised and subtle opposition to each effort and act of Truth, mainly carried on by counterfeit, in order to confound, darken, and, if possible, destroy that truth. And as the laws of crystallization hold good in the smallest as well as in the largest masses, so do these laws reign throughout empires and nations, cities and villages, senates and nurseries, homes and hearts,—reign, aye, and have reigned since the fall, and thus, as Solomon said, "there is no new thing under the sun." Men's eyes are slowly opened to perceive what in their blindness they had not before remarked, and they deem that novelty. It is rather an awakening. To the infant babe all is novel, and to the octogenarian sage much is novel; but to Solomon, who in the Spirit saw the end and the beginning, nothing was new—all was one perfect and finished work.

The savage who looks for the first time on the dial-plate of a watch, marvels at its novelty; its figures seem confusion to him; the revolutions made by its hands, a threefold mystery. But to the man who has acquainted himself with the whole structure, who understands the whole mechanism, and traces all to the moving spring, there is nothing novel, surprising, or unintelligible. In like manner, when the natural

man looks upon the dial-plate of earth, he marvels at what he sees : novelty and mystery meet him at every step. Its figures confuse—its revolutions confound and dismay—its hands build up and destroy, revolve and re-revolve,—performing the same, yet divers operations. But to the man, who with the eye of faith sees all to be one perfect and harmonious structure, impelled by one moving spring, and tending to one end—the regaining of our lost paradise, and the overthrow of the Destroyer, by the Prince of Peace—nothing is novel, surprising, or unintelligible. He sees Truth going forth conquering and to conquer, and Error ever counterfeiting and opposing it ; and tracing all to these two motive powers, he descries harmony in every motion and in every sound.

Error's Counter Gospels. 32. But to return. No sooner was the gospel given to the world, than Error and his children commenced their counter gospels. Copies of the Scriptures were rare, and the early heretics declared them falsified. They began therefore to amend Christianity ;—the Gnostics, by their philosophy ; Montanus, by severer morals ; Manes, by the system of Zoroaster ; and Mahomet, by “restoring Holy Writ to its original purity.” From this deadly imitation of Truth, sprang the Ertang of Manes, the Koran of Mahomet, and in our own day the “Golden Bible” of the Mormons,—compared with whose doctrines the two former breathe peace. Yet 300,000 of our fellow-countrymen have been led captive by it, while it is largely

spread over Europe¹ and America. Is there not in this one fact, proof that the mystery of Iniquity already has a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err? However men may shut their eyes to the fact, the Spirit of Error is busily preparing his latter-day apostasy, recruiting, drilling, and uniting all his forces, to anticipate, and, if possible, defeat the armies of Him who has declared that "there shall be one Lord and his name one."

Indwelling Sin
nought Minished
by tracing Evil to
its Author.

33. In following Scripture, and like it tracing all corruption to its source, we by no means overlook the desperate deceitfulness and wickedness of the human heart. These are the very sinews of Satan's warfare, and man supplies him therewith without money and without price. But for this unfailing supply, the enemy never could effect a single triumph. And if it be possible to conceive a sin transcending all sins, and meriting everlasting burnings and fuel of fire, it lies in the fact that men desert the Mystery of Godliness, and sell themselves to the counter Mystery of Iniquity—desert Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and follow him who "was a murderer from the beginning"—desert the God of love and of life, who willeth not that any should perish, to follow the god of hate and of death, who willeth

¹ It penetrated even the remote Highlands of Scotland. In one instance the Mormon prophet, or rather lamb-like beast, *persuaded* all his flock that his hostess and her cow were on a certain day to be translated to heaven. The state of the people was precisely that described in the first of Romans, and the prophet was tried and transported to Botany Bay.

that all should dwell where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. This view of Error, far from annihilating or diminishing man's responsibility and guilt, greatly deepens it; because, professing himself to be a son of God, he is constantly found an apostate deserter from the camp of Truth, leagued with fallen angels—blindly warring in the ranks of the Enemy against the Lord who died for him, and thereby retarding the advance of that kingdom which God shall set up, and which shall never be destroyed. Well may God exclaim to such, "Shall I pardon thee for this? My people have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods."¹

Deductions from the above. 34. But what, it may be asked, is deducible from these historical and scriptural facts? Much every way.

First, we learn that from Paradise lost to Paradise regained, there is an unceasing strife between the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error; while, for every act and strategy of Truth, Error has a counter act, and, where possible, a counterfeit.

And as on Calvary we saw the Devil's thirst of blood, blinding² him to the fact that he was thereby working out his own ruin,—for his triumph would have been to have spared our Saviour,—so do we see his desire to counterwork and imitate Christ blinding him to the fact that he thereby reveals his tactics;

¹ Jer. v. 7

² "For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."—(1 Cor. ii. 8.)

for thus, in his kingdom, where otherwise all had been confusion, a certain harmony and consistency reigns. This is the finger of God, who, by permitting "the Enemy" constantly to mimic and counterwork Truth, which is perfect harmony, thereby introduces harmony into the realms, and among the powers, of darkness. Thereby the God of Confusion becomes the arch-imitator and counterfeit God, and his laws the counter laws of Truth. But for this godlike provision, the church never could have had a key to the tactics of her enemy, whose prevailing characteristic is to veil them by darkness, treachery, deceit, and guile. Hence, too, the marvellous brevity of Scripture on the subject of the Mystery of Error; one example becomes a clue to all, while each Truth points to its counteracting and resisting Error.

35. Again: In following the guidance of Scripture—and we never do so without manifold advantage—we find that, to trace all evil to its author, is greatly to foster charity and love; for we shall then lay on the Adversary the blame and hate which we are, at his instigation, so prone to bestow on his often unwitting and blinded instruments; while, by tracing all good to its Author, self sinks into its proper insignificance, and we attain to that chief of the beatitudes—poverty of spirit; and, conscious of our own nothingness, save as one of the myriad channels through which God has perchance caused a few pure drops of Truth to percolate, when Error throws down to us his sops, the ready answer is, "Shall the axe boast

itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it.”¹

36. We also herein learn, that, vast as is the power of the Spirit of Error, there is a yet mightier Power, whose aid is freely² offered to us, and in whose might³ we may successfully resist the mysterious influence of the Father of Error. In the Spirit and armour of Truth, we *may* continuously resist Error's continuous attacks. *WE ARE FREE*, in God's strength, to eschew the one and pursue the other. Hence, if we neglect His ever ready and all-powerful aid—so oft as the Adversary gains dominion over us—OURS IS THE SIN, though Satan be the instigator and the cause.

37. It is not unfrequently asked, how Holy Writ narrates so much evil? We answer, that, from Genesis to Revelation is depicted a continuous strife between these two counter mysteries; the mixture, therefore, of good and evil is unavoidable; but *ALL THAT IS GOOD IS OF GOD, ALL THAT IS EVIL IS OF SATAN.*

The question to which we allude seems an innocent and anxious one. Yet, to how much evil has it led! Let the God of Error but insinuate a doubt, and though the instrument used exceed not the point of a needle, he will with it eventually make a highway to hell. This

¹ Isa. x. 15.

² “He that hath no money, come ye, buy—yea, come, buy without money and without price.”—(Isa. lv. 1.)

³ “Of ourselves we can do nothing.” “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.”—(Pro. xxviii. 26.)

doubting question—like all want of faith, the result of ignorance—has led numbers to deny the plenary inspiration of Scripture. The evil therein depicted, say they, cannot be inspiration. We must select the inspired passages from those evidently writ by men. Thus God is ignorantly set aside, and every man becomes his own Bible-maker. And as the idiosyncrasies of no two men are alike, so no two Bibles would be alike. A more deadly heresy, or one bearing more markedly the impress of hell, it is impossible to conceive; yet it has many followers, and clearly originates in ignorance of the fact that one great aim of the Bible is to recruit and prepare the armies of the living God for that warfare which the church must, until our Lord come, ever wage, “NOT AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places.”

These sciolists, therefore, reject as uninspired the very portions of Scripture which afford marked proof of inspiration; for man knows nothing of the Mystery of Iniquity, and therefore God, and God only, could have depicted it by myriad types, signs, and shadows in the pages of inspiration.

It is lamentable to see minds like that of Coleridge leaning to such a doctrine, and denying Satanic agency. He happily outlived his blindness. It is not over such minds that the arch-enemy of God and man hopes finally to triumph; but he knows that Error is never so insidious as when veiled by

¹ Eph. vi. 12.

piety and learning. He prevails, therefore, with the pious and the learned to clothe some apparently innocent theory with subtle and refined argument; and then scattering it among the masses, he creates a flood of Error, sweeping thousands to the abyss. Thus the denial of the plenary inspiration of Scripture has many advocates and followers alike in Europe and in America, who contemptuously charge the reverers of every jot and tittle of Holy Writ with bibliolatry. Alas! that such a word should ever be heard in the pulpit. But the pulpit is specially the object of the Enemy's² attack; for he knows that the smallest seed of Error sown by it, will, thistle-like,³ take root and spring up among the flock, and thereby many be defiled!

38. In fine: Truth is uniform, and Error, the god of confusion, is by his constant mimicry and antagonism, also forced into a counter uniformity, and obedience to certain laws. These laws require our deepest study; for Evil has yet to do his worst.

We live in no common times. Spirits of Error

¹ Apo. xii. 15.

² We read of "Satan standing at the right hand of Joshua the high-priest, to resist him." Now, Holy Writ only gives one or more instances, and says, *Ex una disce omnes*. This, we think, explains the many otherwise wholly inexplicable phenomena which we see during all past ages connected alike with the Jewish and Gentile priesthood. In placing a bridle in the jaws of the people, and causing them to err, Error will now as ever agonise to place it first in the jaws of the leaders and teachers of the people. This was his strategy for the first Antichrist, and will be so for his final Man of Sin.

³ The thistle is the well-known emblem of sin. So rapidly is it propagated, that naturalists affirm that one seed yields in a few months enough to cover the face of the whole globe.

have gone forth to gather the kings of the earth and of the whole world to the battle of the great day of Almighty God. The armies of "the Adversary" are mustering and strengthening. Europe bristles with bayonets. The ecclesiastical powers on the continent detest our religious liberty—the secular powers hate our civil. The forces of Error are ready at any moment to make common cause against Truth, whose hosts are disunited and weakened by discord. Each weapon of war has assumed a new and more deadly form, and we have many earnest heralds of the time when "blood shall flow even unto the horse bridles." The Enemy is evidently preparing to make one last spasmodic¹ effort² at uni-

¹ See Intro. vii. 1, 2.

² In the month of October 1851, the leading priestly organ of Paris, the *Univers*, publicly desired a crusade against Protestantism and Truth.

The following remarkable extract from the eminent Mr Miller's Lectures on Geology may prove interesting. The few coincidences in view go to show that the deductions from Scripture and science agree. Where they do not, the vast imperfections of the latter must yield to the perfectness of the former :—

"There has been war among the intelligences of God's spiritual creation. Lucifer, Son of the Morning, has fallen like lightning from heaven, and our earth, then a half extinguished fire, had received him and his associates. Dead matter exists, and in the unembodied spirits vitality exists, but not yet in all the universe of God has the vitality united to the matter. Even to the profound apprehension of the great fallen angel, animal life is an inconceivable idea. As centuries roll by, the miserable prisoners of our planet become aware that there is a slow change taking place on the condition of their prison-house. The red fire bursts forth less frequently. The dread earthquake shakes more rarely, save in a few centres of intense action. At length there comes a morning in which the great ocean and scattered isles declare that God the Creator has descended to visit this earth. Creation wears a coat of verdure, creeping things appear among trees, and now the mystery of animal life commences to be developed in successive dynasties of being. We cannot doubt that on that morning of creative miracles, the comprehensive intellect of the great fallen Spirit, profound and acute beyond the lot of humanity, would have found active employment in attempting to fathom the vast mys-

versal sway; that, by the overflowings of ungodliness, he may sweep Truth from the earth. The child of lawlessness has been again set up to herald him who shall set aside all law. With that deepening of intensity which ever pervades prophecy, the events of years are now concentrated into days. The "elder born of Rome," appalled by anarchy, has crouched to despotism; and Evil already has a

tery, in vainly asking, like the Athenians of old, what these strange things might mean. With what wonder, as scene succeeded scene, and creation followed creation, as life sprung out of death, and death out of life, must not that acute intelligence have watched the course of the Divine workings, scornful of spirit and full of enmity, and yet aware, in the inner depths of his intellect, that that at which he dared insultingly to scoff, he yet failed, in its ultimate end and purpose, adequately to comprehend! Standing in the presence of unsolved mystery, how thoroughly must he have felt, and with what bitter malignity, that the grasp of the Almighty was still upon him! With what wild thoughts must that restless and unhappy spirit have wandered among the tangled masses of the old carboniferous forests, and how, as day after day passed away, and he looked back upon myriads of ages, and called up in memory the time when what had once been the features of the earth seemed scarce more fixed than the features of the sky—how must he have felt as he became conscious that the earth was first ripening, and being made by its Creator the home of still higher and higher existences—how must he have felt as he looked upon the advancing work of creation, until at length the great truth burst upon him, that reasoning, accountable man was fast coming to the birth—man the moral agent—man the ultimate end of creation—man the creature in whom, as in the inferior animals, vitality was to be united to matter, but in whom also, as in no inferior animal, responsibility was to be united to vitality! How must expectancy have quickened when, after the dynasty of the fish had been succeeded by the dynasty of the reptile, and that by the dynasty of the mammal, the time at length arrived when the earth had become fixed and stable, when the proud waves of the ocean had been stayed, and the creative Hand seemed to pause from its working, and the finished creation to demand its lord! Even at this late period, how strange may not the doubts and uncertainties have been that remained to darken the meaning of the last period! According to Satan's experience, stretching backwards to the first beginning of animal vitality, and coextensive at a still earlier period with the history of God's spiritual universe, it was the law that all animals should die, that all moral agents should live. How shall it be with this new creature, this prodigy of creation, who is to unite what had never before been united—the nature of the animals that die with the standing and responsibility of the moral agents that live? How, in this par-

"bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err." The pure eras of the church were succeeded by heresy and persecution—the spread of learning in the sixteenth century was met by that counterfeit literature which claims "the Father of Lies" as its author—infidelity followed reform—the increasing thirst for spiritual things was met by a refinement of Error, capable, "if possible, of deceiving the very elect."

taker of a double nature, was the discrepancy to be reconciled? How were the opposite claims of life and death to be adjusted? At length creation receives its monarch; for, moulded by God's own finger, and fashioned in God's own likeness, man enters upon the scene,—an exquisite creature, high in intellect, tender in heart, and pure in spirit. Still there is something that betrays his earthly lineage. It is into the dust of the ground that the living soul has been breathed. Man is the son of the soil, and, like the inferior animals, sleeps and wakes, and can feel thirst and hunger, and the weariness of toil and the sweets of rest, and comes under the general law—*increase and multiply*—imposed on the animal creation. Man seems to stand less firm than the indomitable Spirit himself and his associates stood of old, and even they rebelled and fell. There arises a grim hope in the breast of the great Enemy of God. For ages, he thinks, has this temple been building, and now there needeth but one blow, and the whole edifice is destroyed, and God's purposes marred and frustrated. And with the experience in evil of unassumed ages, the Tempter applies himself to the work of seduction. Nor is it to low or ignoble appetite that he appeals—it is to the newly-formed creature's thirst for knowledge—it is to his love stronger than death. The wiles of the Old Serpent prevail—man falls prostrate before him—creation tramples—and then from the midst of the trees of the garden comes forth the voice of God, uttering an enigma mysterious and dark, which points to a new dispensation of Providence. Then victims bleed, altars smoke, the tabernacle arises amidst the white tents in the wilderness, the temple shines all glorious on the heights of Zion, prophet after prophet delivers his message. At length, in the fulness of time, the Messiah comes, and in satisfying the law, fulfilling all righteousness, and bringing life and immortality to light, abundantly shows forth that the terminal dynasty of all creation had been of old foreordained before the creation of the world, to possess for the eternal Lord and Monarch, not primeval man created in the image of God, but God made manifest in the flesh in the form of primeval man. Warily did the fallen angel deal, and darkly did he devise and carry out his deep counsel against the Almighty, and yet all the while, when striving and resisting as an enemy, has he been wielded as a tool—when carrying out his own dark rebellious designs, the grasp of the Almighty has been upon him, and he has all unwittingly been working out God's foreordained decrees."

There is, therefore, every reason to infer that the present vast efforts made on behalf of Truth throughout the world, will be followed by a vast counter outburst of Evil in the earth. And as events thicken in mystery around us, let us learn to recognise in the evil, the power of that spirit, who, though invisible, is the Leader of the armies of Error. Scripture gives him a most prominent place: man it terms a worm, a vapour, "altogether lighter than vanity;" Satan, a prince, a king, a god. We find him standing to oppose God's High-Priest—in the seals he is set, with the kings, and rulers, and people of the earth, against the Lord and His Anointed.¹ He parleys with God, he deceives the WHOLE WORLD,² and even the Archangel Michael durst not rail against him. If we would rightly understand all the Error we see around us, know whither events are tending, and what the issue of the world's war, as well as our own vast interests in it, we must give the Adversary similar prominence, and not suffer him, in the bewildering multitude of his instruments and operations, to blind us to the end and aim of all his wiles.

It is a hazardous and difficult duty to reconnoitre the position, tactics, and strength of the Enemy. But it must be done at all risks; and no temerity is equal to that of undervaluing the Enemy, his powers and resources. They are great—as compared with man wellnigh infinite; he is about to put them all

¹ Ps. ii. The psalm will be found replete with allusions to the battlefield of seals, the "wicked one" and his hosts visible and invisible, as well as the continuous contest of the armies of Truth and Error, and its triumphant close.

² Apo. xii. 9, and xx. 8.

forth, and it is at our peril that we neglect to watch his efforts and to study his laws.

If ever an age called for anxiety and watchfulness on the part of the shepherds of Israel, it is the present: equally does it inculcate union throughout the flocks, for "brethren in calamity should love."

39. Lastly: We are prone, in reading Scripture, to think that its teaching ends with the occasion. We are apt to limit its words to one event. Whereas each event is parabolic, teaching and illustrating all kindred ones,—or, as we read, "is written as an example for us." Truth is imperishable, and cannot die. A word of God once spoken, cannot pass away with the occasion. It spans the Alpha and Omega of time, and in its arch embraces all kindred applications. In proof of the vast teaching contained in historic facts, we may rapidly glance at the building of Solomon's temple.¹ For it may greatly help us to understand the commingling Mysteries of the Seals, if we but remember that as Lebanon was the workshop of Zion, so is this our globe the quarry-house of Heaven. All the material of the first temple was hewn, and quarried, and graven on the mountain; "no tool of iron was heard in the house."

"No hammers fell, no ponderous axes rung!
Like some tall palm, the mystic fabric sprung!—
Majestic silence!"

¹ This work occupied seven years,—a period full of instruction, tallying exactly with the many prophetic periods of prophecy, as well as with the tradition of the house of Elias (B.C. 200) that the world endures 7000 years—2000 before the law—2000 under the law—2000 under Christ—then the Sabbathism or 7000—and the end.

All this shadowed forth the building of that temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. There no hammers fall, no axes ring; God is in his holy temple, and all heaven is silent before Him; He fainteth not, neither is weary; on He goes in his work, conquering and to conquer every obstacle and every foe.

Ere He left his church, to go and prepare her place, knowing what she would suffer in his quarry-house, He bequeathed her these words of comfort, "Let not your hearts be troubled. In my Father's house are many mansions: I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Earth, then, is the Lebanon of heaven. Hence all its vast, and unceasing, and often mysterious turmoil, and din, and bustle of preparation. Hence the incessant quarrying, and hewing, and blasting, and chiselling; hence, too, earth's unceasing noise, and clamour, and strife. "Look to the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the pit whence ye are digged." It is because man's rugged and stony heart, even when hewn from the world, and sawn asunder from sin, requires so much of the hammer, and of the axe, and of the chisel, that he receives such rough treatment. He must receive such, or be utterly and for ever rejected. It is finished, and polished, and "lively stones," that the Master Builder seeks; rugged, or unhewn, or misshapen, or blemished ones, must be passed over. He could find no place for them. But He is ever coming¹ to his quarry-house, directing

¹ Pref. 9.

and superintending all its minutest operations ; and as each stone is hewn, and graven, and polished, and beautified, and fitted for its niche on high, by all the various instruments which He has permitted to play upon it, He removes it to heaven.

As in the earthly temple—so in the heavenly.

Here all is noise—there all peace.

Here all is labour—there all rest.

Here all strife—there all love.

This the school—that the life.

Mysterious and incredible as it may appear, Error, the great enemy of God and man, is the unwilling and unconscious Foreman in the quarry-house of Truth. He supplies most of the tools. The chisels of sin are his ; the gravings of remorse are his ; all the sharp, false, and cutting words are his ; the scorpion stings of truant friends are his ; his the biting coldness of the world's charity ; his the "stoning and sawing asunder."¹ All the marring, torturing, and deforming lines are his. He prepares the furnace of affliction, and supplies all its fuel,—heating it, when permitted, sevenfold. He plies the four sore scourges of God—sword, and famine, and pestilence, and death.² His the massacres of the innocent and of the guilty, of babes in Christ, and of mature believers. His the "Holy Apostolic Inquisition," as it is blasphemously termed. All war, cruelty, bloodshed, rebellion, persecution, and, in a word, all sin, all suffering, and all pain, are of him.

Even God's children are his bond servants ; he plies

¹ Heb. xi 37.

² All these are given to the Beast from the bottomless pit. See second, third, and fourth seals.

their ruthless scourge, he tempts, he harasses, he "sets taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens,"¹ and "they sigh by reason of his bondage." "He makes their lives bitter—in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service; all service wherein they are made to serve is with rigour."² He it is who "unceasingly spreads strife between the sons of Truth and the sons of Error—the Egyptian and the Hebrew."³ He it is who supplies Israel with incessant worldly occupation, "lest they go and sacrifice to their God."⁴ Yet he cruelly withholds what would make their burden⁵ easy, and their labour light, and says unto them, "Go, gather it for yourselves." And in their affliction they go bending unto their God, and out of his fulness have all their wants supplied, and the "more they are afflicted, the more they multiply and grow."⁶ Thus do all the works of Error subserve God's righteous ends. Sin, pain, grief, and all the powers of the enemy, are made to do His will; and despite of Evil, all things work for Good. Calvary, the seeming triumph of the Devil, was the salvation of a lost world; and out of the poison of Eden, God brought the Bread of Life.

Great is the Mystery of Error! but greater far the Mystery of Godliness!

¹ Exod. i. 11. ² Exod. i. 14. ³ Exod. ii. ⁴ Exod. v. 8. ⁵ Exod. v. 7.

⁶ His yoke is oppression. See third seal.

Paul talks of delivering such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, 1 Cor. v. 5.

"He that built all things is God"—"whose house we are."—(Heb. iii. 6.)

"Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."—(Eph. ii. 20-22.)

COMMENTARY.

CHAPTER I.

1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things

Ver. 1. We have here the title, history, objects, and author of this book. It is the Revelation of things shortly to come to pass, received from God, made by Jesus Christ, through his angel, and recorded by St John. The book exceeds in majesty and grandeur all previous prophecies, and is justly termed "The Revelation." It is the winding up of the whole wonderful scheme of redemption—the Omega of the Word of God. The word Revelation, ἀποκαλύψις, is translated "appearing and manifestation" in 1 Pet. i. 7, and Rom. viii. 19. The book, therefore, applies intermediately to the unveiling of the future, made to the church in every age; ultimately, to the "appearing" of our Lord to judgment, when "every eye shall see him."

Which God gave unto him.—As the Mediator between God and man, "the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand."—(John iii. 35; v. 20; Matt. xxviii. 18.)

To show unto his servants.—"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." This book reveals nothing to others. The servants of mammon and of the world see nothing herein to desire. They neither hear, nor read, nor keep its sayings savingly. The plainest revelation of God, without the illumination of the Holy Spirit, warming the heart and lightening the eyes, are as useless to man in his natural state as are the rays of the sun to the blind. Love, or, as our translation has it, "charity," can alone make the Word of God mighty to save. "The pen of Love wrote the Apocalypse; the heart of Love will best decipher it."

which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

2. Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

3. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear

"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."—(1 Cor. ii. 14; John xiv. 17.)

Things which must shortly come to pass.—In other words, the history of the immediate future, from A.D. 96 down to the restitution of all things. *Ἐρραχῆς*, speedily, quickly, shortly. "Surely, I come quickly."—(Rev. xxii. 6, 20.)

Signified by his angel unto John.—Made it known by signs and symbols. Angels are the common agents in such revelations. "Who have received the law by the disposition of angels."—(Acts vii. 53; Gal. iii. 19; Heb. ii. 2.)

2. *Who bare record of the word of God.*—Who was the faithful witness of the Deity, testimony, and acts of his beloved Master, *Ἐμαρτυρῆς*. He bare witness wheresoever he preached; while he spoke and wrote as he was moved by the Holy Spirit. John "saw and bare record that this is the Son of God."—(John i. 34.) As a witness, he was now in exile.

Testimony of Jesus.—Apo. xii. 17; xix. 10. Jesus is called "the faithful and true witness," Rev. iii. 14; John xviii. 37.

3. *Blessed is he that readeth.*—What infinite condescension! God, the everlasting Word, not only stoops from on high to reveal to perishing mortals his schemes for the future, thus opening a rich and overflowing fountain of wisdom, by the hand of "Him in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," but he promises to every one that readeth, heareth, and keepeth the words of this Revelation, that "blessing which maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow with it." It is obvious from this and many verses, that the Apocalypse is a book which men should read, hear, study, and inwardly digest, and that the popular apology for its neglect is only an additional proof that the *vox populi* is usually in direct antagonism to the *vox Dei*.

4. *John.*—The beloved disciple,—“the son of thunder,”—(Mark iii. 17), was of lowly origin, a fisherman, the son of a fisherman, born in Bethsaida, a small fishing village. "God hath

the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein : for the time *is* at hand.

4. John to the seven churches which are in Asia;

chosen the weak things of this world to confound the mighty, that no flesh should glory in his presence." St John, on the banks of Jordan, heard the Baptist cry, "Behold the Lamb of God, and he followed Jesus."—(John i. 37.) At the ordination of the Twelve on the mountain top, St John was surnamed Boanerges, "son of thunder," perhaps in anticipation of the thunders of the Apocalypse which he was to utter and record. He was "the disciple whom Jesus loved." With St Peter and St James he was present on the mount of transfiguration, and in the agony of Gethsemane. He alone leaned on Jesus' bosom. He alone lingered near the cross, and received the dying charge of his Lord, "Behold thy mother:" and he was the first after the resurrection who "saw and believed" that Jesus "had become the first-fruits of them who slept." And lastly, we find him in the year A.D. 96 an exile in the Isle of Patmos, recording "the Revelation of Jesus Christ."

Seven churches.—The first address is to the seven churches named in chapters ii. and iii. Prophecy has commonly an immediate, intermediate, and ulterior application. The immediate application here is to the seven churches of Proconsular Asia; the intermediate, to all who in faith appropriate the words and promises of God; the ulterior, to the catholic or universal church to the end of the *aiwv*. There are what may be termed holy numbers, such as three, twelve, seven. Seven denotes perfection or fulness. Thus "seven eyes," denote omniscience; the seven Spirits of God, the fulness of the Spirit; the seven horns of the Lamb, the fulness of his power; the seven seals, the seven trumpets, the seven vials, denote the completeness of the judgments they symbolise. One possessed of "seven devils," is one wholly possessed by Satan. (Matt. xii. 25; Luke. xi. 26; viii. 2.) So in nature, seven colours compose light, Note x. 1; seven notes music.¹ Analogy runs through nature and Scripture up to nature's God, and is one of his appointed guides to man. What an important lesson is conveyed by that division of time that flies meteor-like across our path! A week! seven days! The French thought one day in ten would do, hence their decades. The heathen has his day of rest, and man may suppose that one day in eight or six would do equally well. Far from it!

¹ It has been ascertained that certain periods are necessary to exhaust the changes on six notes, but seven are inexhaustible. They are in fact perfect, six being imperfect.

Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from Him which is and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne:

It would jar with God's system of analogy and types. (Col. ii. 17.) It would show that the hand of man had intruded itself into God's arrangements, and marred their beauty. God worked six days and rested the seventh. Hence the church in all ages has looked to the seventh millenary, "the year of the Lord's release." (Deut. xv.), as that Sabbatism or "rest" that remaineth for the people of God. (Sketch ix.) The term "seven churches," then, denotes in its ulterior application the universal church. There were in all twelve churches in Proconsular Asia, and to reconcile this fact with the address to seven only, many writers suppose, from dim notices in Tacitus, Pliny, and Eusebius, that three of the twelve churches were destroyed by earthquake, and that two existed after the Apocalypse. Scripture is so invariably accurate in each and every application, that this supposition is in all probability correct. And although human records here fail us, we have in the strict accuracy of the Divine every reason to suppose that when John wrote, only seven principal churches existed, which were accordingly used by the Holy Spirit to illustrate the church universal,—just as in the prophecy of our Saviour, "There shall come a star out of Jacob," a *literal* star was made to illustrate the Holy Babe. Prophecy, we have seen, selects the present to depict the future; and it is, therefore, in strict accordance with the usual structure of prophecy, that the seven existing churches should be selected to illustrate all churches. The numberless intermediate applications of the epistles to the churches, must be obvious to every faithful reader. Hence Bishop Wilson's invaluable rule—"The way to profit by reading Scripture, is to apply to ourselves that which is spoken in general to all; this truth, this command, this threat, this promise, this intimation is to me." We are commonly wrong when we limit the words of Scripture to one application,—they are for yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

The seven Spirits.—Few expressions have been more controverted. Some (Eichhorn, Ewald) suppose it to refer to God: others (Grotius, &c.) to the "multiform providence of God," acting in many ways. Beza, Hammond, Stuart, and many others, suppose the term to mean seven ministering angels: others, the Holy Spirit, whose fulness and perfection is represented by seven, and in Apo. iv. 5, by "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne." That the latter opinion is correct, seems obvious from the fact that grace and peace are here invoked from the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The word used is spirits, not

5. And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

angels, and angels are nowhere called the spirits of God; while the phrase "Spirit of God" evidently refers to Divine, and not to angelic natures. It is argued that "before the throne" is not the position of God the Holy Ghost. But the Holy Spirit is the executive of the Trinity, "neither made nor created, nor begotten, but PROCEEDING." "I will send the Comforter unto you." "When He the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth." "He will show you things to come."—(John xvi. 7, 13). "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance."—(John xiv. 26). Now, both in the Old and New Testament, the term "before," indicates one's executive; there is, therefore, in this very word, strong proof that the Holy Spirit is referred to. Seven denotes the variety and perfection of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as set forth in 1 Cor. xii. 7-14.

5. *Jesus Christ the faithful witness.*—From verses 5 to 7, we have a brief description of our beloved Lord and his bride, the Church, from the first to the second advent, when every eye shall see Him, and we are carried on to the end of the millennium.

Christ Jesus came into the world to bear witness unto the truth. He sealed our redemption with his blood, thereby witnessing to the truth of the gospel, nailing our transgressions on his cross, and giving us in exchange his righteousness.—(See Notes iii. 14. John iii. 32.)

The Prince of the kings of the earth.—"By him kings reign, and princes decree justice."—(Prov. viii. 15.) "He increaseth the nations and destroyeth them: he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again. He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth."—(Job xii. 23.) This is the immediate application, the ultimate one is to our Lord, "putting down all rule and all authority," that He whose right it is may reign.—(Apo. xvii. 14; Phil. ii. 10; Eph. i. 22.) The end of the Apocalypse is Christ's establishment as "Prince of the kings of the earth," and it is usual in prophecy thus to embrace the beginning and the end, for in God's eye they are one.—(Intro. i. 7.)

Washed us from our sins in his own blood.—Thus were the priests typically washed with blood before entering on their office.—(Exod. xxix. 4; xl. 30, 32.)

6. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

7. Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him: and

6. *Made us kings and priests.*—Jesus is a king and priest, and to all believers he says, “The glory which Thou gavest me I have given them.”—(John xvii. 22.) “All things are yours.” In Apo. xx. 4, the seer beholds “thrones,” and the redeemed “lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” While in ch. xx. 6, it is said they are “priests of God and of his Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” Even in this life, they “as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood,” but at the first resurrection they shall walk with him in white, “kings and priests of God and of his Christ.”—(See Exod. xix. 6; and 1 Pet. ii. 9; Apo. v. 10.)

7. *Behold He cometh with clouds.*—Here we observe that the seer’s eye glances along the vista, attracted by the most prominent object in it, which he accordingly details.—(Sketch 15–17.) Of this we shall have ample proof as we proceed. It is meet that the seer should here see the end and object of the Apocalypse. The coming of our Lord is the Alpha and Omega thereof. “This truth, ‘he cometh,’ reacheth from the first promise that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head, to the last word of Revelation.”—(*Keith.*) Clouds, besides its literal application, is the symbol of hosts.—(Heb. xii. 1.) Each coming to judgment, and in wrath, is a coming in clouds, typical of His great final coming.—(Sketch 10.)

They which pierced Him.—“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”—(Matt. xxv. 40.) “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?”—(Acts ix. 4.) The expression, therefore, includes all who, having heard the gospel, “have trampled under foot the blood of Christ, done despite to the Spirit of grace, and crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh.” These apostates are distinguished from those who, never having heard of Christ, have not pierced him by rejection. The Jews were not the only crucifiers of our Saviour—he is daily pierced by every child of disobedience.

All kindreds or tribes of the earth shall wail because of Him.—There is nothing that the world dreads more than the coming of our Lord to “tread the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”—(Apo. xiv. 20.) And by shutting their eyes to

all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

8. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

9. I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos,

it, men, ostrich-like, think to avert its horrors.—(App. H.) Yet that day “shall come, will come, and will not tarry.”—(Hob. x. 37.) And that we may the less doubt it, a double assurance is here given—“*ναὶ ἀμὴν*—assuredly, certainly, one in Greek, the other in Hebrew.”—(Stuart.)

8. *I am Alpha and Omega.*—Literally, the first and the last. In chap. xxii. 13, it is said, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last,” and that no doubt may remain, verse 16 adds, “I Jesus.” In this we have a most clear proof of the divinity of Jesus, who here has all the titles attributable to God the Father. “The Word was God.” “Which is, and which was, and which is to come,” is the Greek expression of the Hebrew Jehovah. The Jews used the first and last letters of the alphabet to denote entirety.

9. *I John.*—I John, who am your brother in Christ, a companion in that tribulation which all who follow Christ must endure, and patiently awaiting, with you all, that kingdom about to be revealed, am banished to Patmos for the “testimony of Jesus Christ;” that is, for confessing and preaching Christ. To preach a new religion in the Roman empire, was to be guilty of sedition. The Spirit of Error tolerates every religion save the true. John, being unfitted for the mines, was banished at the age of ninety to Patmos, a small barren island in the Archipelago, belonging to a cluster called the Sporades. The modern town called Patino or Patmosa, and the monastery of St John, crown the hill, as in Syra and other Grecian isles. The inhabitants are 4000 in number: “the men attired in rags, and the women literally bundles of filth.” St John is held in such high veneration by the Turks, that the monks are allowed to sound a bell for prayers—a privilege denied to all other religious institutions. A cave is shown in which St John is said to have seen and recorded the Apocalypse, and the monks trade in the stone thereof for the cure of

for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

10. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

diseases. It is considered second only to the holy sepulchre at Jerusalem in sanctity.

10. *I was in the Spirit.*—All the prophets wrote as they were moved by the Spirit of God. St John may have been lifted up, as was Ezekiel (viii. 3), for it is said to him, "Come up hither" (iv. 1; 2 Cor. xii.) St John received the Apocalypse in and through the Spirit, and by the Spirit can we alone understand it. "These things are spiritually discerned." "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us."—(Rom. viii. 26.)

On the Lord's day.—We have shown, Sketch 9, that all the Sabbaths point to the day of the Lord. The phrases are identical, and the one before us admits of a double application:—first, to the Sabbath on which St John wrote; secondly, to that great Sabbath to which all Holy Writ eventually points. It is not a little remarkable that this is the only instance in which the Sabbath is termed the "Lord's day." This makes the double reference more obvious. In Acts xx. 7, the Sabbath is called the "first day of the week," showing that the early church observed the *first*, not the seventh day. The observance of the seventh day was enforced on Sinai.—(Deut. v. 15.) That ritual was but the shadow of things to come.—(Col. ii. 17.) The moral part remained, being universal and perpetual—the ceremonial part ceased with the gospel economy. The moral part consisted in keeping holy one day in seven—the ceremonial part in keeping the seventh day holy. Our Lord rose from the dead on the first day of the week, and his apostles made that the Sabbath. It was the Day of Light, of Life, of Resurrection, of Pentecost, and of Revelation. The descent of the Holy Ghost, and the appearance of Christ to his church after his resurrection on that day, intimate the Divine approval of the change. "The fathers commonly apply the term Sabbath to the Jewish Sabbath or seventh day of the week; and the Lord's day to the Christian Sabbath, or first day of the week."—(*Stuart.*)

And heard behind me.—"Thine ears shall hear a voice behind thee saying, This is the way, walk ye in it." The still small voice which speaks in every man. That light which lighteneth every man which cometh into the world. All are but variations of one and the same voice. The Spirit our Intercessor abideth with us for ever.—(Rom. viii. 26; John xiv. 16).

11. Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last : and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia ; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

12. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks ;

A voice as of a trumpet.—The trumpet invariably ushers in great and important truths. The Jewish proclamations were all announced by it. The trumpet sound was conspicuous amid the terrors of the delivery of the law on Sinai. It will be so again when the Lord cometh with clouds, and the voice of an archangel, and the trump of God : and the dead in Christ rise first. —(1 Thess. iv. 16.)

11. *Write.*—The decalogue was written on tablets of stone “by the finger of God.” God thus taught man to write, and the great object thereof was that the Bible might be written. Had it not been so, Truth had long ago expired in the muddy and uncongenial waters of tradition.

12. *Seven golden candlesticks.*—Lamp or candlestick is the emblem of a Christian church. Light symbolises spiritual knowledge. “Ye are the light of the world.”—(Matt. v. 14; Phil. ii. 15.) The lamp or candlestick bearing that light denotes a church. One family is called a church (Rom. xvi. 5; Col. iv. 15; Philem. 2); while the term is also applied to all God’s children of every nation, from the beginning to the end of time.—(Col. i. 18.) Christ tells us that “the seven candlesticks are the seven churches.”—(Ver. 20.) The whole scenery of the Apocalypse has reference to the Jewish tabernacle and temple of old. John being turned saw a chamber like the holy place of the temple, and in it seven separate golden candlesticks bearing light, and in the midst of them one attired like the high-priest of old—like also to the Son of man. The Holy of holies in the temple typified the glorified church ; the holy place where the priests were, typified the true spiritual church militant ; and the altar court where the people were, the visible church. Thus God, in compassion to our ignorance, mercifully explains the future by the past, and by a

13. And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

14. His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire;

15. And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

vast and beautiful system of analogies and types, extending alike throughout creation and his Word, makes things so plain that he who runs may read. The ulterior application of the term seven candlesticks is to the church universal to the end of time. In the opening of the Apocalypse, Christ is conspicuous as priest and prophet; in its close, as king. It commences with his predicted advent, "Behold he cometh with clouds;" and it ends with his literal advent.

13. *Clothed*.—The high-priest of old was similarly attired.—(Exod. xxxix. 5; Lev. xvi. 4.)

14. *His head white, his eyes as a flame of fire*.—This would immediately recall to St John what he witnessed on the Mount of Transfiguration, when our Lord's face shone as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.—(Matt. xvii. 2). Daniel also (vii. 9; x. 5-6) saw the Ancient of Days, his garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz; his eyes were as lamps of fire, and his feet in colour like to polished brass. The voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. The hoary head in Scripture implies reverence, wisdom, honour. Eyes of fire, omniscience, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.—(Heb. iv. 12.) "The light of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire."—(Exod. xxiv. 17.) Feet of brass denotes strength and endurance, sufficient to trample every enemy under foot. Χαλκοῦσανα, brass from Lebanon, esteemed finer than gold.

15. *His voice was as the sound of many waters*.—The sea in prophetic language is the symbol of society in convulsion. Waters symbolise "peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues."—

16. And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength.

(Apo. xvii. 15.) The expression, therefore, "His voice was as the sound of many waters," is precisely similar to Daniel's, "The voice of his words was like the voice of a multitude." This voice, once the "still small" voice of Bethlehem, shall "shortly" appear to "shake, not the earth only, but also heaven," and they who have not heeded its whisperings of mercy while their Redeemer stood craving admission into their hearts, will experience that worst of woes, "the wrath of the Lamb." Ezekiel says, "The glory of the God of Israel came from the east; and his voice was like the sound of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory."—(Ezek. xliii. 2.)

16. *In his right hand seven stars*,—"Which are the angels or messengers of the seven churches."—(Ver. 20.) Right hand is the symbol of power and might. Angel is used in the Jewish language for ruler or head of a church, one commissioned by God to deliver his message of glad tidings. In prophetic language, while sun symbolises a monarch, star means an inferior ruler, lay or ecclesiastic, according to the context. As stars, they should shine as lights in the world, and reflect the rays of the Sun of Righteousness. Christ said to his disciples, "Ye are the lights of the world."

A sharp two-edged sword; or, the Word of God. St Paul says, "The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."—(Eph. vi. 17.) It is also said, "The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword," "and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."—(Heb. iv. 12.) It is with this weapon, "the Spirit," or "sword of his mouth," that Christ shall consume Antichrist.—(Apo. xix. 15.) And these are our weapons, mighty to the pulling down of strongholds, even the fruits of the Spirit, joy, love, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Of the princes of Tartary, it is said, on their assuming the government, "His word shall be a sword."

His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.—His face beams as the sun in its meridian splendour. So did St John see Him when transfigured on Mount Tabor. So did St Paul behold Him on his way to Damascus. In his humiliation as the Son of man, his visage was marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men, and he had no beauty which we could desire. But before the meridian blaze of his exaltation as the Sun

17. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

18. *I am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

of Righteousness, the first heaven and first earth shall flee away, and in the New Jerusalem we shall need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lamb shall be the light thereof.—(Apo. xxi., xxii.)

17. *I fell at his feet as dead.*—Great bodily exhaustion appears not unfrequently to have accompanied prophetic visions.—(Ezek. i. 28; iii. 14-23; Dan. viii. 17, 18, 27; x. 8-10.)

Fear not.—Tantamount to "Fear not, it is I."—(Matt. xiv. 27.) The attributes of God the Father are here, as elsewhere, assumed by God the Son. And such passages prove that Unitarianism or Socinianism is merely one of the many instances in which men are "given over to a delusion to believe a lie," in opposition to reason, consistency, the plain declarations of God, and their own present and eternal welfare.

18. *Was dead.*—Equivalent to, I am he that died upon the cross, because I loved mankind more than life! The Lord of glory was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He was made captive, that we might be liberated. He was falsely accused, that we might be pardoned by our Judge and Advocate. He was bound for sins not his own, that we might be released from our sins. He was a man of sorrows, that we might be men of peace. He was full of grief, that we might have "fulness of joy." He was despised among men, that we might be glorified before God and the angels. He hung stricken upon the cross and died, that we might be healed and live. His garments were parted, and for his vesture they cast lots, that we might be arrayed in the garments of salvation, and in robes of righteousness. He was cursed, that we might be blessed. He tasted death, that we might have life everlasting. And he wore a crown of thorns, that we might wear a crown of glory! Herein is love!

The keys of death and hell.—Key symbolises ecclesiastical authority, having power to open and to shut, to bind and to loose. Hell here should be translated Hades, which is the name given to the condition of those who, having quitted their mortal bodies, are

19. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter ;

20. The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches ; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

awaiting in bliss or wo, according as they lived, the Judgment-day and the Resurrection.

Dr Cumming observes, "Hades is not a third place, but a third condition. The soul and body here is in one condition. The glorified soul and body is in another. The soul without either old or new body is in Hades. Hades is always understood to mean the invisible world, the realms of departed spirits."

19. *The things which are.*—These words are sometimes quoted as showing that the seven epistles have no reference beyond the seven churches mentioned. But have the words spoken to Moses or any other servant of God only one application? Is not every syllable "written for our learning?" They who argue that these seven epistles have no symbolic meaning, forget that "all Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect."—(2 Tim. iii. 16.)

The things which shall be hereafter.—Rather, the things which shall be after these.

20. *Seven stars.*—See note 16. The primary reference here is to the heads of the seven churches. The ulterior to those of Christ's church universal, just as the seven candlesticks ulteriorly refer to the church universal.—(Notes, v. 12.)

CHAPTER II.

1. Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write ;
These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in

Ver. 1. Each address opens with a detail of some one of the Saviour's attributes. If we place these seven attributes together, we have a full and complete description of the Lord our God. There is also an exact adaptation of each recorded attribute to the state of the several churches.

Ephesus was the capital of Proconsular Asia, situated on the river Cayster, between Smyrna and Miletus. Pliny calls it and Smyrna, the eyes of Asia. It was celebrated for its commerce and voluptuousness; its temple, and worship of Diana. St Paul resided three years here, and founded a church.—(Acts xx. 31.) St John lived and wrote here. "But the plough has passed over the city, and green corn grows amid the forsaken ruins; and but one solitary individual was found who bore the name of Christ. Where once assembled multitudes shouted, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians!' now the eagle screams, and the jackall yells." Ephesus at present consists of a few mud cottages, inhabited by cultivators and herdsmen. Her candlestick has been removed (5), her Christianity is totally extinct, and with it has perished her glory and renown. Righteousness exalteth a nation—sin is its reproach. Christianity is the only cement which will keep the component parts of a vast empire permanently together. It is this that has preserved England during late revolutions; and, on the extent and degree of this will ultimately depend whether we are, like the rest of Christendom, to be broken in pieces (Dan. ii. 32–35) by the stone cut out without hands, and to become like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; or whether, "having done all," we shall stand unscathed amid surrounding ruin. The earthquakes of the last half-century are the trumpet voices of warning; they have wellnigh given their last peal; "the day is past, the night is at hand, and we are not saved." The alternative is clear, "No place shall be found for us!" Prophecy

his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

2. I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

will be as true to Britain as it was to Ephesus. Repentance alone can save. Gibbon remarks: "In the loss of Ephesus, the Christians deplored the fall of the first angel, the extinction of the first candlestick of Revelations: the desolation is complete; and the Temple of Diana and the Church of Mercy will equally elude the search of the curious traveller."

Who walketh in the midst.—As the high-priest walked in the holy place, tending the seven lamps; so Christ here walks, tending the seven churches, or the church universal, holding its stars or rulers in "his right hand," that "their footsteps slip not."

2. *I know thy works.*—Words seven times spoken, because Christ's piercing "eyes of fire" knew all things that concerned this and every church. "All things are naked and open to Him." "Yea, there's not a thought of our hearts, but, lo! O Lord, thou knowest it altogether." The Poet of Night says—

"God denies all creatures but himself
That hideous sight, a naked human heart."

And thy labour.—*Koσac*, Labour, trouble, weariness from labour. "Your labour is not in vain in the Lord."—(1 Cor. xv. 58.) "Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour."—(1 Cor. iii. 8.) Labour in Christ's cause necessarily involves trouble from his enemies. It is to such wearied soldiers of truth that our Lord says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—(Matt. xi. 28.) The apostle says, "Therefore we both labour and suffer reproach."—(1 Tim. iv. 10.)

Which say they are apostles.—In every church and age, false teachers, followers of Judas, will be found. We are therefore directed by God, "not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits whether they be of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world."—(1 John iv. 1.) The Church of Ephesus, we here learn, tried certain teachers calling themselves apostles, and found them "liars." And this is stated by our Lord among the facts entitling them to commendation.

3. And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

4. Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

3. *For my name's sake hast laboured.*—Every one should ask himself—as in the presence of God, for in that presence we must all one day answer the question—Am I labouring for Christ's sake, or for that which satisfieth not? Labours of love are at once the most agreeable and the most profitable—they lead to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, eternal in the heavens. He who strives merely for the things of this life, “adding house to house and field to field,” toils for an inheritance with which he must part at the portals of the tomb. While he lives, it is in fear lest the fruit of his labours make themselves wings and flee away as the eagle towards heaven; and when he dies, if not new born, it is in the assurance that his entry into the dark valley of the shadow of death will be the watchword of a triple strife—heirs for his riches, worms for his body, devils for his soul. Professor Stuart thus renders this and the previous verse: “Thou canst not bear with false teachers, but thou canst bear with troubles and perplexities on account of me: thou hast undergone wearisome toil, but thou art not wearied out thereby.”

4. *Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee.*—A beautiful encomium is first passed, then a faithful rebuke. Let us follow this example, and commend before we reprove. When St Paul addressed the Ephesians, all was commendation; but now they had “left their first love.” The first glow of conversion had caused their love to bud and bring forth all its fruits—adding to their faith virtue (*ἀρετήν*, more properly “manly energy”), and to manly energy knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. But now love had grown cold; its sap was drying up, and its fruits were withering. Remember, then, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals. Remember whence thou art fallen, repent, and do thy first works. What is here said to Ephesus, is said equally to each and every church, to each and every person. It is one of the many fruits of the fall, that man's appreciation of mercies pales under enjoyment. Through the prevalence of Error, within and around us, our senses become deadened to things which are common. Every one can appreciate an astounding miracle; but how few heed that greatest of miracles—the Bible! This church tasted Christ's love largely, and left it.

5. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works ; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

6. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

5. *I will remove thy candlestick.*—This threat was fulfilled in the devastations of the Saracens and Turks ; but, before the final removal, this church had many warning calls to repentance in the persecutions of the Roman Emperors. On Exod. xxv. 32, Scott remarks, that the seven candlesticks on the chandelier of the temple were all removable at will ; so it is with those of the Apocalypse. We thus find endless proof of the accuracy of Scripture in the merest minutia—thus assuring us of its vast scope, and that there is no hyperbole in “even the hairs of your head are all numbered.” Great and small exist only in our vocabulary. God makes every thing work together towards one end, the issue of which is involved and linked, not only with great events, but with small. The smallest fragment in a watch is as essential to the mechanism as the largest. But what endless and intricate mechanism is employed to guide each and every prophecy to its destined terminus ! The prophecy relating to Ephesus has been re-enacted again and again in many churches and in myriad souls.

6. *This thou hast.*—This much I must say in your favour.

Hatest the deeds.—The Christian’s love is, “Love to the sinner, the most ardent he can feel ; hatred to his sins, the most unmitigated he can conceive.”—(*τὰργα*, the works.)

Nicolaitanes.—The Spirit of Error, though one in aim, is so multiform and so varying in its every phase, that it is difficult to seize and accurately detail the doctrines of most false sects : they change,ameleon-like, before the test of truth. If this be true in the present age, it is doubly so of the early heresies. The Nicolaitanes are supposed to be heretics, bearing the general name of Gnostics, or knowing ones. They denied the incarnation of our Lord, the resurrection of the body, joined in heathen sacrifices, and held peculiar notions as to the origin of the globe, and of good and evil. Vitringa and many writers have justly considered the name symbolical, like Jezebel or Balaam. The meaning of the term is, “*The people conquerors*”—*νικος*, victory, and *λαος*, people—a striking resemblance to “*the sovereign people*,”

7. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

of which we hear so much now in Europe. Such being the case, and keeping in view the structure of prophecy, we can scarcely disallow a typical connection between those early sects and the swarms of Socialists and Democrats who infest Europe, preparatory to those awful events of which it is yet to be the theatre.

7. *He that hath an ear, let him hear.*—Let all mankind hear! Seven times in this one book does God thus earnestly invoke the attention of *all* to it. And twice in this book does He promise his blessing to all who hear its words. This is not the case with any other book in Scripture. Such is the importance which God attaches to Revelation. How different man's estimate of it!

To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life.—That is, to every victor in the Christian warfare against the Spirit of Error will I give everlasting life. St Paul describes this strife when he says, "We wrestle *not against flesh and blood*, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places.—(*Margin.*) Wherefore, take unto you the whole armour of God."—(Eph. vi. 12.) This is the Christian warfare, the mystery of which is unveiled in the Apocalypse, and every victor therein shall hereafter eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of that second paradise of God—the New Jerusalem. With the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit; with our loins girt about with truth, our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace—we, too, may be victors; and we have a safe and strong consolation set before us, such as earthly warriors never strove for—

"Assured that Christ our King
Is with us while we fight:
We on the field of battle sing,
And triumph in His might."

The tree of life.—"In the midst of the street of the New Jerusalem, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life; which bear twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the trees were for the healing of the nations."—(Apo. xxii. 2.) The first Adam, by disobedience and death, shut up our way to the tree of life in the first Paradise:

8. And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

the second Adam, by obedience and death, has opened unto us a far better way to the tree of life in the second Paradise of God.

8. *Smyrna*—is an important and flourishing city in Asia Minor. It lies at the head of one of earth's most magnificent bays. Its length is about thirty-five miles; it is studded with the ships of all nations, and constitutes Smyrna the great emporium of Levantine trade. Its streets are a perfect Babel, resounding with every tongue. Its population is about 120,000. It claims to be the birthplace of Homer. Its environs are beautiful and picturesque, especially as viewed from the bay. On the summit of a hill overhanging the town, and adjoining an apparently extinct crater, stands the ruin of a small fort, and in the centre are shown vaults said to be part of the ancient church of Smyrna. The town has been nine times destroyed by earthquakes. During a stay of five days we experienced six shocks: a few occurred immediately before our arrival, and some very severe ones after our departure. Nothing is said of removing the candlestick of this church; on the contrary, it is stated, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." And accordingly we find that Christianity still lives here and flourishes—its light has never been extinguished. We lately attended divine service there, at an English Episcopalian church in the morning, and an American one in the evening. During service at the latter, a very severe shock of earthquake shook the building from top to bottom, vibrating through the hearts of the assembly and the voice of the preacher. The houses are chiefly built of wood, as being more elastic than stone; but the noise made is proportionably great. Missionaries from the New World have established themselves here.

The angel.—The ruler of the church and his line. Many suppose that the reference is to Polycarp; but, admitting this, we see no cause for limiting the expression to him. He was the friend and disciple of St John, and died a martyr at Smyrna in his eighty-sixth year. The proconsul said to him, "Reproach Christ, and I will release thee." He replied, "Eighty-six years have I served Him, and He never wronged me. If I deny Him before men, He will deny me before God. How can I blaspheme the King who has saved me?" He was then given up to the flames. In his martyrdom the Jews were especially active.

The first and the last, which was dead, and is alive.—None but

9. I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich,) and *I know* the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but *are* the synagogue of Satan.

God can be first and last. No deity but Christ was dead and is alive. Our Saviour's faithfulness in death is here cited as an encouragement to the Smyrnaïtes to be likewise "faithful unto death" in the persecutions foretold, that they too might live and receive a crown of life.

9. *Thy works.*—(See ver. 2.)

Tribulation.—Christ knows our tribulation; nay, more, "in all our afflictions he is afflicted;" and he adds, "Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy."

I know thy poverty, but thou art rich.—"Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom."—(James ii. 5.) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."—(Matt. v. 3.) "All things are yours."—(1 Cor. iii. 22.)

Which say they are Jews, and are not.—The reference here is, "To the Jew first, and also to the Gentile." "They are not all Israel which are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children."—(Rom. ix. 7.) "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly."—(Rom. ii. 28.) These Jews appear to have been emissaries of Satan, zealous in corrupting and persecuting the Christians. We find them distinguishing themselves in first demanding, and then assisting at, the martyrdom of Polycarp. So we invariably find it with those who have known the way of life and departed from it. "The latter end with them is worse than the beginning." "It is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." The immediate reference, then, is to nominal Jews; the ulterior, to nominal Christians, who say they are of the true Israel, but lie; for, as in the Apocalypse, the scenery of the Jewish tabernacle is used to illustrate the history of the true catholic church, so the term Jew forms, besides its literal use, the symbol of the Christian. "The Israel of God," is the true church of God; but these were of the synagogue of Satan. From 1 Thess. ii. 14, 15, we learn that the Jews were the first great persecutors of the true church.

The synagogue of Satan.—This remarkable expression is twice used in these addresses. The full meaning of the term will gradually develop itself as we proceed. It is the mode of the

10. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tri-

Apocalypse thus to anticipate in brief, what it is afterwards to give in detail. This synagogue is unveiled in the third seal, and in many subsequent chapters.—(Notes, iii. 9.)

10. *Fear none of those things.*—"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."—(1 John iv. 18.) And again, we are told, "Fear always." Servile fear is referred to in the first instance; filial fear, in the second. In Apo. xxi. 8, "The fearful shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone," along with "the unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars." And the epithet is probably placed first in this fearful category as denoting the most universal sin. Felix feared and trembled. The devils believe and tremble.—(James ii. 19.) "The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him" (Prov. x. 24), is a statement which we see almost daily realised. Job says, "The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me."—(Job iii. 25.) The chief priests and pharisees called a council, and said, "If we let him (Christ) alone, the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation."—(John xi. 48.) It is well known how terribly the fear of the wicked overtook them here! The beautiful counterpoise to this threat is, "The desire of the righteous shall be granted." The most beautiful exemplification of the result of Christian courage is to be found in the Forty-sixth Psalm. It proclaims the stay and confidence of the church, and of each individual believer, amid the last fiery tribulation that shall overtake the world; and such it proved to Luther, when "hell from beneath was moved," because of returning light. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble: therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. . . . The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. . . . Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

The devil shall cast.—Scripture invariably goes to the fountainhead, attributing all that is good to God, and all that is evil to the Adversary. Men, on the contrary, are ever bewildering and losing themselves in the labyrinth of secondary causes.

bulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

11. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

12. And to the angel of the church in Pergamos

We should have said, "Men shall cast you into prison;" God says the Devil shall. We look often to the blind instruments; God, to the prime mover.—(App. A.)

Tribulation ten days.—There were ten Pagan persecutions of the church, and the tenth lasted ten years. The number is mystical; for we read of ten talents, ten times, ten kings, ten crowns, ten horns, ten laws. The church suffered ten days, from Ascension to Pentecost.

11. *The second death.*—In Apo. xx. 14, we read that the casting into the lake of fire constitutes "the second death." The first death takes place in this world, when dust returns to dust, and the spirit to God who gave it. The second death takes place after the resurrection of the wicked, when the sea and death and hell deliver up their dead to be judged out of those things written in the books, every man according to his works. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire." "This is the second death."—(Apo. xx. 6, 14, 15; xxi. 8.) The contrast to which is, "The crown of life" to the righteous. The Apocalypse is full of contrasts.

12. *Pergamos*,—situated on the banks of the Caicus, about sixty-four miles north of Smyrna,—was the capital of Mysia, the seat of literature, the arts, and of the Attalian kings. The present population is about 15,000, chiefly Turks: 3000 of these are Greeks and Armenians. Many of its churches have been turned into mosques. It was the "seat of Satan," the "destroyer;" hence its present desolation. The address to this church is full of rebuke; yet it begins in mercy, by stating all that can be said in its favour. There is no threat to remove its candlestick, as in the case of Ephesus; hence, a shadow of a church exists here; but Christ has "fought against it with the sword of his mouth." The last of the kings bequeathed it to the Romans, and it became the seat of a proconsul. It was noted for its idolatry. Its library, consisting of 200,000 volumes, was given by Antony to Cleopatra.

Sharp sword with two edges.—See Note i. 16. In each epistle,

write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

13. I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas *was* my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

Christ's description of himself is suited to the peculiar condition of the church addressed.

13. *Where Satan's seat is.*—Or, as elsewhere expressed, “where Satan dwelleth.” I know how great are the temptations to which you are exposed. I know the difficulties of your position. You are in Satan's strongholds, where he has many agents and numberless snares. “Rome is the centre of all the forms of Antichrist. Pergamos was probably, therefore, symbolical of Rome.”—(*Delta.*) See Apo. xiii. 2. Error and persecution were both rife at Pergamos: in the one lay the danger of the church; in the other, its safety. Satan is the author of both; hence, the city is fitly termed his.

Thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith.—“With the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”—(Rom. x. 10. “Whosoever will confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father in heaven.”—(Matt. x. 32.) “Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of the Father with the holy angels.”—(Mark viii. 38.) “God is not ashamed to be called our God.” “He is not ashamed to call us brethren.”—(Heb. ii. 11.) But vain man, whose life is but a vapour, is too often ashamed of his God, too often denies the Lord that bought him! And why? Because Satan's seat is here, even in his heart.

Antipas.—There is no record extant respecting this martyr. It is a high destiny, however, to be enrolled in the Apocalypse. That he died in and for Jesus, is all that we require to know of any man. “One thing is needful” in life and in death—faith in the Lord of glory. Solomon gave us this epitome of Scripture and of faith, “Love God and keep his commandments; this is the whole duty of man.” The Greater than Solomon epitomised it still further, “Only believe.” The word means, “like all.”

14. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

15. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

16. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

14. *Thou hast them that hold the doctrine of Balaam.*—The history of Balaam is given, Numb. xxii.-xxiv. He was a prophet, though a wicked man. Some of his predictions have been fulfilled. He says, "I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord." He would have prophesied ill to God's people, but he was restricted. The chief priest prophesied when he said, "It is needful that one man die for the people." Covetousness seems to have been Balaam's besetting sin; and he was, therefore, ready for money to curse Israel at the request of Balak, king of Moab. Balaam tried every device; but at length tells Balak, "I cannot curse where God has blessed." Failing in this, Balaam taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, by presenting to them the daughters of Moab. It is difficult to curse, but it is easy to corrupt; and then the curse must follow, as it did here. "There was a plague among the congregation of the Lord."—(Num. xxxi.) Idolatry, and its concomitant licentiousness, were the sins of these Balaamites. To eat things sacrificed unto idols implies idolatrous worship. The solemn law given, Acts xv. 29, is, "That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication." The Balaamites here referred to were guilty of a double breach of this law. Balak and Balaam, the king and false prophet, are obvious types of Antichrist and his false prophet; and, like the antitypes, they were both slain in battle.—(Num. xxxi. 8.) Of all the typical characters in these epistles we shall learn more in the sequel.

15. *The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes.*—See Notes, ii. 6.

16. *The sword of my mouth.*—See Notes, i. 16. This church

17. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and

is twice named as Satan's headquarters. He, we learn in the second seal, has a great sword. Our Lord's sword is, therefore, twice named here in contrast.

17. *The hidden manna.*—The manna which fell in the wilderness, and which was laid up (*κατακρυμμένον*) in the tabernacle, was the type of that spiritual food which must descend from heaven into the soul of every believer, and without which he must languish and die in the pilgrimage of life. The toil of seeking it required to be repeated every morning.—(Exod. xvi.) So we must seek in prayer every morning a fresh supply of spiritual sustenance. What we gained yesterday will not suffice to keep our souls vigorous and healthy to-day. Christ says, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh."—(John vi. 51.) The Jews said unto Him, "Our fathers did eat manna in the desert. Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."—(John vi. 31–33.) Various explanations have been given of the term "hidden," such as, "this bread of life is hidden under the Jewish types, and the gospel emblems of bread and wine." But a type is used to reveal, not to hide; it is a ray of light, not a ray of darkness. Believers are called God's "hidden ones" (Ps. lxxxiii. 3); their food is the hidden manna, elsewhere called "angel's food," and "the corn of heaven."—(Ps. lxxviii. 24, 25.) "The secret (or hidden thing) of the Lord is with them that fear him." This hidden life of believers, fed by the hidden manna, constitutes in the aggregate the invisible catholic church. The world sees it not, and knows it not (John iv. 32); the secret of the Lord is with them, and they have no power of *themselves*, and apart from God, to impart that secret to others. God alone can breathe it into the natural man; this he does by his Holy Spirit—the hidden manna. We here see the usual contrast of Truth and Error. The Gnostics boasted of possessing hidden spiritual food, which none devoid of their (false) faith could partake of. Most heretics have done the same: instance the Mormons. It is the counterfeit of the true doctrine, "Believe and live." The Hebrew word manna or man, means, "What is it?"—the exclamation used as it fell. When Israel entered Canaan under Joshua,

will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

the manna ceased (Joshua v. 12); it was hidden in the ark as a type and memorial.

A white stone.—Anciently in passing judgment, a white stone signified acquittal, or triumph; a black one, condemnation. The meaning is, that to every victor in the Christian warfare Christ will, at the judgment, give the usual mark of triumph. White is the chosen emblem of purity and holiness. In Deut. xxvii., the Israelites are directed to take stones and plaster or whitewash them, and write the law thereon. There is here, we believe, a further allusion to another ancient practice, and one to this day to be found in the East slightly modified, viz., at parting, the host took a white stone called "tessera," gave a half to his guest, and kept the other half, each bearing their respective names. In after life, these stones formed tickets of admission. A white stone given by Christ would ensure admission to the marriage supper of the Lamb. We must not pair down and limit the meaning of Scripture terms. Every word in Holy Writ is radiant with light and meaning. We too commonly catch but one or two rays and are satisfied. Eternity will disclose that the heights and depths of Scripture are as boundless as the other works of Deity. We daily see that God can make one act of His—small, trivial, it may be in our eyes, but infinite as proceeding from His mind, and as connected with His government—subserve a myriad ends; so He can make one word of Holy Writ radiate light and meaning throughout the countless ages of eternity. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."—(Mark xiii. 31).

In the stone a new name written.—"A new name imports a new state. Abram, Sarai, Simon, and others, were called by new names when placed in new positions. The new position here referred to is immortality in heaven."—(*Daubuz.*) Joseph's name was changed, so was Daniel's, and that of others. At baptism, we all typically receive a new name. "I will write upon him my new name."—(Rev. iii. 12.) "Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name."—(Isa. lxii. 2.) New is peculiar to the Apocalypse; new song, new name, new heavens, new earth, new Jerusalem; it is the making all things new, the re-creation.

Which no man knoweth.—"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned."—(1 Cor. ii. 14.) "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."—(Rom. viii. 16).

18. And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet *are* like fine brass;

19. I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last *to be* more than the first.

20. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel,

18. *Thyatira*, now called Ak-hissar, or White Castle, is situate about fifty miles to the south-east of Pergamos. It is chiefly inhabited by Turks. No vestiges of this church are to be found, its site is unknown, and its spirit has long fled. The wrath of the Lamb, foretold in vers. 22, 23, has fallen upon it; her children are killed with death, "that all the churches may know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts." It was noted for its purple dye (Acts xvi. 14), which is still exported to England in large quantities, but the art of dyeing has been lost in Thyatira.

Eyes like fire.—Denote the omniscience of the Deity, penetrating all things, and piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. —(Heb. iv. 12).

Feet like brass.—Denote strength and endurance sufficient to trample under foot every enemy and every obstacle. Anciently to separate the wheat and chaff, oxen were shod with brass. We see in the feet like fine brass here given to the Son of God, the working out of that earliest prophecy of Genesis iii. 15: "The seed of the woman shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel"—a prophecy that will only reach its culminating point at "the second death, when death and hell are cast into the lake of fire."—(Rev. xx. 14).

19. *And the last to be more than the first.*—This denotes the progress and growth of this church in spiritual matters: their last works were better than their first. To stand still in the Christian warfare, is to desert Christ's cause. "Excelsior" is our war-cry; and they who advance not, fall away. We must not act against the Adversary and his hosts on the defensive merely, but on the offensive.

20. *Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel.*—Jezebel is a type of the

which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

21. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

Arch-apostasy. Ahab, king of Israel, did more to provoke the Lord to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him. He took to wife Jezebel, and went and served Baal. "There was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up."—(1 Kings xxi. 25.) A woman is frequently used as a symbol of a church. Wicked as she was, she "called herself a prophetess." She was the patroness of idolatry. So Rome has ever patronised idolatry by worshipping saints and images, and even in her manifestos in this age of light, the nineteenth century, Mariolatry is openly and unblushingly avowed. Jezebel cut off all the prophets of the Lord, except those hid in a cave.—(1 Kings xviii. 14.) The victims of the Church of Rome are computed at fifty millions! And God himself tells us, that "in her (*i. e.*, in Papal Christendom) was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."—(Rev. xviii. 24.) It is further said of her, "I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."—(Rev. xvii. 6.) The deeds and doctrines of the Latin Church we must hate, as Christ hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes. The members of the Latin Church we must love and pray for. While the name Jezebel is evidently symbolic, as throughout the book, there is reason to suppose that there was in this church a literal false prophetess, who in her life re-enacted that of the ancient Jezebel, and formed one of the links which usually connect the type and antitype. Things present are thus made to illustrate things future; in other words, the seen to depict the unseen. The symbolic teaching of the epistle evidently points to a false church calling herself a true one, who seduces the servants of God into spiritual adultery and fornication. She will not repent, because infallible. Being a counterfeit church, our Lord's eyes are described as a flame of fire piercing the dissimulation, and discerning the true from the false.

21. *I gave her space to repent.*—The more closely we examine the history of nations and of individuals, the more surely shall we find that to each and every one space is given for repentance. Warning follows warning, and vengeance is delayed until God's

22. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

23. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

long-suffering is exhausted, and sin is complete. God's natural laws are applicable alike to worlds and to atoms—to the falling star and to the falling fig; so are his spiritual.

22. *I will cast her into a bed.*—That is, I will “cast her down into the nether parts of the earth, with them that go down into the pit.” “All of her multitude round about her grave, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, which are gone down uncircumcised into the nether parts of the earth, which caused their terror in the land of the living.” “They have set her a bed in the midst of the slain with all her multitude.”—(Ezek. xxxii. 18–25.) “Bed” is used to remind her of her seductions and fornications. “The fear of the wicked,” we are told, “it shall come upon him,” and “the sin of the wicked it shall find him out.” And “He shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness.”—(Ps. xciv. 23.) Retributive justice commonly takes this form, the more readily to bring man's sins to his remembrance. This the ultimate punishment does not exclude the more literal and immediate one, the bed of pain, suffering, and sickness, which would but serve as a type or warning of the greater and final one.

23. *Kill with death.*—A Hebraistic expression, supposed to denote the certainty of the punishment. But there is no such thing as tautology in Holy Writ. Words are not used merely for emphasis; on the contrary, each word has a fuller and deeper meaning than our blindness can generally compass. “To kill her children with death,” appears to mean, that they shall suffer the double death of soul and body. It is said, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power.” And “death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.”—(Rev. xx. 6, 14).

Her children.—The children of her fornication. All those who have committed idolatry with her and held her doctrine.

I search the reins and hearts: and give according to your works.—

24. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, (as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak,) I will put upon you none other burden :

25. But that which ye have *already* hold fast till I come.

26. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my

"I the Lord search the heart, and try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."—(Jer. xvii. 10.) See Note ii. 18, on "Eyes like fire."

24. *As many as have not this doctrine.*—The doctrine of Jezebel, or of the church of Antichrist. "Whosoever abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed."—(2 John 9, 10).

The depths of Satan.—Referring to the existing phase of the "Mystery of Iniquity"—a mystery ever varying in form, but never in spirit. The nature of these depths is fully explained in the sequel. In 1 Cor. ii. 10, we read of the "deep things of God," the Mystery of Godliness. Satan has his counter deep things, or the Mystery of Iniquity. The Gnostics held that lust was to be overcome by indulgence, and that it was necessary to taste iniquity to overcome it. Hence, possibly, the force laid on works, and on the word *γινωσκω* (whence Gnostics) in these epistles. Truth indicating Error by contrast.

Burden, is frequently used by the prophets, and means a solemn charge, exhortation, or message of sorrowful and threatening import. It is the reverse of the gospel message, which is the "glad tidings of great joy."

25. *Till I come.*—Our passover we celebrate until Christ comes.—(1 Cor. xi. 26.) On the comings of our Lord, see Sketch 10. The expression looks through many intermediate comings down to the final one.

26. *He that overcometh.*—Believers at death are "more than conquerors through Him that loved us." To all these conquerors Christ in these epistles to the church makes various great and precious promises. See Notes, v. 7.

My works.—They are "love or charity, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance."

works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations :

27. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron ; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers ; even as I received of my Father.

26-27. *Power over the nations.*—Paul says, “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? Know ye not that we shall judge angels?”—(1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.) “And I saw thrones, and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them : and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”—(Rev. xx. 4.) “And out of his (Christ’s) mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations ; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron.”—(Rev. xix. 15.) Christ does this, and the saints, as part of Christ’s body, do so likewise ; and compose “the armies in heaven, which follow him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean” (Rev. xix. 14), “which is the righteousness of saints.” “Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron ; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”—(Ps. ii. 8, 9.) We everywhere find Christ promising to believers what he had himself received of his Father. “The glory which thou hast given me, I have given them.”—(John xvii. 22 ; Apo. iii. 21.) The psalms have commonly at least a four-fold application—to David, to Christ, to the church, and to each member of the church. David, whose prophetic eye clearly saw the glories of the coming millennium, sings, “Let the saints be joyful in glory. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand ; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people ; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron ; to execute upon them the judgment written : this honour have all his saints.”—(Ps. cxlix. 5-9.) But the promise has a primary fulfilment. They have most power even in this life who have Christ on their side. “Righteousness exalteth a nation,” as well as every individual who possesses it. Prayer has been called “almighty,” and the power of religion is almighty too. An eminent divine says, “There is a power and a permanency in real and vital godliness which denudes consuming time of his action, temptation of its power, and persecution of its grim and ghastly features :” and, it may be added, death of its sting, the grave of its victory, and grief of its corroding cares, while it beholds in death the halo only of everlasting life.

28. And I will give him the morning star.

29. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

28. *I will give him the morning star.*—"I Jesus am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."—(Rev. xxii. 16.) We have in these verses Christ's own assurance, that every conqueror and every saint shall share the power, brightness, might, majesty, and dominion of the Lord of glory. "They shall be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ," and "shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."—(Matt. xiii. 43.) Such being our destiny, well may it be said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."—(1 Cor. ii. 9.) We have already stated, that "star" symbolises a ruler. "There shall come a star out of Jacob" (Num. xxiv. 17), and "we have seen his star in the east," foretold Christ's advent, the latter even to unbelieving Herod. Symbolic language was well understood of old. The present age is greatly ignorant of it; hence one great obstacle to the right understanding of the Apocalypse, which is highly symbolic.—(App. B).

CHAPTER III.

1. And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

Ver. 1. *Sardis*.—Once the celebrated capital of Croesus and the Lydian kings, is now a miserable village. It lies about thirty-five miles east of Smyrna, on the banks of the golden-sanded Pactolus. The extent of its present ruins attest its former grandeur. The present village is called Sart: it has one Turkish mosque, perverted to that use from being a Christian church. The inhabitants are chiefly Turkish herdsmen. Very few bearing even the name of Christ are to be found here, and they have no priest or church. The works of this once renowned, opulent, and voluptuous city were not found perfect; she had a name to live, but was dead: therefore the Lord “came upon her as a thief.” Her glory is departed, and she is utterly wasted. It was taken by Cyrus, B. C. 548. In the time of Tiberius it was destroyed by an earthquake, but rebuilt by his order. Under the Romans it sank in wealth and importance; and the Moslem completed what voluptuousness, and the avenging hand of time and of earthquakes, left unfinished. Two remarkable pillars survive the general wreck, supposed to belong to the Temple of Cybele, built 300 years after that of Solomon.

Seven Spirits and seven stars.—That is, the fulness of the Spirit, and of supremacy in the church. (See Notes i. 4, on Seven Spirits.) Christ has “in his right hand seven stars.” (See Notes i. 16.) Our Lord is frequently represented as sending forth the Holy Spirit into the world (John xv. 26, 27; xvi. 7, 13, 14)—his being represented here as having the Holy Spirit of God to send forth, is highly appropriate.

2. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

3. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief,

A name that thou livest and art dead.—Thou art a Christian in name, but not in heart or in deed. "Many are called" Christians, "but few chosen." Nominal Christianity is as different from real and vital godliness, as day from night. The one has the *form* only, the other the *power* of religion; the one is the spirit of Christ, the other the spirit of Antichrist; the one is the spirit of Truth, the other the spirit of Error. The one class forms the church of Christ, the other the synagogue of Satan. Under these two heads all mankind now range: there is no middle rank. Under these two great heads they will all be classed at the judgment day. It behoves us, then, earnestly to inquire to which denomination we belong. The question concerns all eternity. Eternal joy or eternal sorrow hangs upon the choice now made. "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, follow him."—(1 Kings xviii. 21.)

2. *Be watchful—ready to die.*—The flame of spiritual life was flickering in the socket: the church is therefore called upon to strengthen the things that are ready to die, by prayer and watchfulness. Attention to this, our Lord's charge, becomes the more urgent as the "end of all things draws nigh." We are told to be watchful, that we may "withstand the Adversary in the evil day."—(Eph. vi. 13.) The day of evil dawns. Satan has come down in great wrath, knowing that his time is short, and is mustering his hosts for battle. His commander, Antichrist, is making his last spasmodic effort, veiled in the robes and speaking the language of Christianity: He is striving by the utmost subtlety and refinement of argument to seduce Christ's soldiers from their allegiance. "False Christs and false prophets shall arise, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."—(Matt. xxiv. 24.)

3. *Remember.*—Call to remembrance that Christ died for you; that His blood is a fountain prepared for all sin and for all uncleanness. Remember that that fountain is as open to you as were the waters of Jordan. Go to it, bathe in it seven times. Leave thy impurities there, and take in exchange the righteous-

and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

4. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments ; and they shall walk with me in white : for they are worthy.

ness of Christ. Say not, with the leper of old, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean?" and, like him, turn away in a rage.—(2 Kings v. 12.) The very simplicity of the cure, "wash and be clean," made it a scorn to his proud heart. So it is with us: the fountain is open, the sole requirement is, "wash and be clean;" but pride prevents us plunging in. "Are not our own deeds better than all the deeds of Israel? If we do err occasionally, God is merciful." Thus do men argue, forgetting that a God all mercy is a God unjust; while, on the margin of those waters stands their Lord, proclaiming, in accents of love, to a perishing world: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."—(Isa. lv. 1.) But our "ears are heavy that they cannot hear." There is no alternative. If we plunge not into this fountain prepared for the redeemed of God, we must plunge into that lake prepared for the devil and his angels.

4. *Names*.—Name in Scripture is a synonyme for "person." Of the assembled disciples it is said, "The number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty."—(Acts i. 15.)

Which have not defiled their garments.—The believer, on being "born again," puts on the righteousness of Christ; and will at death put on "robes of righteousness and garments of salvation;" and shall "walk with Him in white." But in this world their spiritual garments are constantly exposed to taint and defilement. They carry about with them a "body of death"—a heart desperately wicked and deceitful above all things. This is one source of defilement; Satan is another; sin, the world, and the flesh, are others. Yet they come out of this mire "more than conquerors, through Him that loved them." What greater triumph can heart desire? This is indeed the victory of victories! It is these spiritual garments which, if not defiled, will entitle the wearers to a seat at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Garments were anciently given to those who were honoured with a seat at the table of the great, as tokens of admission and honour.

They shall walk with me in white.—It is said of the saints in heaven, "They have washed their robes, and made them white

5. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

6. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

7. And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is

in the blood of the Lamb."—(vii. 14.) White is the peculiar colour of Christ. On Tabor, "His raiment was white as the light." And it will be the peculiar colour or badge of His people likewise, as part of His body, and in right of their inheritance as "joint-heirs with Christ." White is emblematic of righteousness, purity, holiness, and glory. It was the dress of the priesthood in the temple; it will be that of the "royal priesthood" above. It is also called "the righteousness of saints."—(xix. 8.)

5. *The book of life.*—God's register of that "general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven."—(Heb. xii. 23.) The Israelites were thus enrolled. "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life."—(Rev. xx. 12.) "The book of life" is the register of the living—the spiritually living. "The books" are the registers of the dead—the spiritually dead. Heaven is called the holy city—these are the city registers. The Jews had family as well as city registers, from which, when a member suffered death for crime, his name was blotted out.

I will confess his name.—Jesus will own all that are his before God and the angels, saying to them, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."—(Matt. xxv. 34.) "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."—(Matt. x. 32.)

7. *Philadelphia.*—A city of Asia Minor, about thirty miles south-east of Sardis: so called from its founder, Philadelphus; now called by the Turks, "The city of God"—Ali Shair. Like Smyrna, it has suffered much from earthquakes. It is still a considerable town, extending over three or four hills, and has some trade. It contains about 250 Christian families, and five churches.

true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

8. I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast

It is the seat of a Greek archbishop, with inferior clergy. The ruins are inconsiderable. The promise to this church is, "I will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world;" and accordingly, as in the case of Smyrna, we find she has weathered the storm before which all the others gave way. Gibbon states that this city resisted the Turks more successfully than any; and after defending her religion and liberties for four-score years, at length capitulated with Bajazet in 1390. He adds: "Among the churches, Philadelphia alone has been saved—a column in a scene of ruins." Here we have one instance among many of the superior accuracy of Holy Writ to that of the most accurate historian. Smyrna also has been saved, and is another column amid a scene of ruins, "because the Lord hath spoken it." One solitary pillar at Philadelphia is often noticed, as pointing to the words of the text, "A pillar in the temple of my God."

He that is holy, he that is true.—Christ is called "The Holy One of Israel," and the True. "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."—(1 John v. 20.)

He that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth.—Key in prophecy is the symbol of ecclesiastical authority. The allusion here is to Isaiah's prediction of Christ: "And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder: he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open."—(Isa. xxii. 20–22.) Christ is the supreme governor and steward of the household of God. The reader will not fail to observe how, in Isaiah's prophecy, Eliakim the son of Hilkiah is chosen as its primary application; while the seer's eye instantly glances onward in the vista, and refers to Christ, on whom his words mainly dwell, though still with a partial and primary reference to Eliakim, who is an admitted type of our Lord.

8. *An open door.*—Door is used in a variety of metaphorical senses in Scripture. We find "a door of utterance," "a door of

a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

9. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

hope," "a door of mercy," "a door of deliverance," "the door of faith."—(Acts xiv. 27.) Our Saviour says, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved."—(John x. 9.) He is the door and likewise has the key. "He stands at the door" of our hearts "and knocks."—(Rev. iii. 20.) Paul says, "a great door and effectual is opened unto me" to propagate the gospel. Christ seems to say to the Philadelphians, and through them to all, Behold, I have laid before you every privilege and facility; the door of acceptance with God is open to you; I have the key, and no man can shut it.

Thou hast a little strength.—Thou art weak in numbers, in worldly power and riches. Outwardly thou art feeble; inwardly thou art strong. Or, it may refer, as some suppose, simply to spiritual strength. But this view is negatived by the commendation which follows, which implies more than a little spirituality; for not to deny Christ in those days, was to risk the perils of martyrdom and ensure persecution.

9. *Them of the synagogue of Satan.*—That is, the children of disobedience. There are but two classes of persons in the world: those of the church of Christ and those of the synagogue of Satan—the sons of truth and the sons of error.—(See Notes ii. 9; iii. 1, on "art dead.")

Say they are Jews, but do lie.—(See Notes ii. 9.)

I will make them to come and worship before thy feet; or, more correctly, to *fall prostrate* at thy feet.—The ordinary mode of expressing superiority in the East is by prostration at the feet. The expression, therefore, seems to imply that the church's enemies will do obeisance unto her, and thereby acknowledge her members to be the children of God. This was repeatedly the case in the early and later ages of the church; but its plenary fulfilment can only take place when truth has triumphed finally and for ever. To this Isaiah and all the prophets testify: "The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel."—(ix. 14.)

10. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

11. Behold, I come quickly : hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

12. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out:

10. *The hour of temptation upon all the world.*—It is generally supposed that this refers to the persecution under Trajan. This, doubtless, is the primary application, for, during that persecution, this church was miraculously preserved, the Romans dreading its earthquakes. But the prophecy mainly refers to the “keeping” of this church throughout the days of the Gentiles. Therefore it has stood during that period, while, with one other exception, all the seven churches have perished. “Upon all the world,” is clearly yet unfulfilled. The words, therefore, have, we believe, an ultimate reference to the day of the Lord, emphatically “the hour of trial which shall come upon all the world,” but through which this and every true church will be kept. Our Lord’s very next words are, “Behold, I come quickly”—words necessarily pointing to our Lord’s final coming to destroy his enemies. Scripture abounds with promises to the righteous in that day of trial. Zephaniah says, “It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord’s anger.”—(ii. 3 ; Ps. xxviii. 5 ; Isa. xxvi. 20, 21. See App. H. and G.)

11. *Hold that fast.*—Keep the faith : “hold fast your profession.”—(Heb. iv. 14.) Christians formerly were called “hold-fasts,” from the tenacity with which they clung to their religion even unto death. “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering : for He is faithful that promised.”—(Heb. x. 23.)

Take thy crown.—The crown (στέφανος) is the laurel wreath given to victors at the Olympic games. This the church had in earnest, and she is, therefore, warned to let no man take it from her.—(2 John 8.) “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation : for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”—(James i. 12.)

12. *A pillar in the temple of my God.*—The church is called “the pillar and ground of the truth.”—(1 Tim. iii. 15.) Teachers, prophets, and apostles are likewise called pillars.—(Prov. ix.

and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and *I will write upon him* my new name.

13. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

1; Jer. i. 18; Gal. ii. 9.) It was customary to engrave upon lofty pillars the names, titles, and achievements of conquerors; and Christ here promises to inscribe these Christian pillars with all the customary honours and details. It will tend to explain much of the mystery which we see around us, if we ever keep in view that earth is the quarry-house of heaven. All the material for the earthly temple was prepared on Lebanon, "so that there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor tool of iron heard in the house while it was building."—(1 Kings vi. 7.) The antitype of this temple, is "the temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." This is its Lebanon or workshop; here every soul (called by the apostle "lively stones,") is quarried, chiselled, and prepared for its niche on high. Some require much of the iron and the hammer, some little; some call for all the machinery of God's power. Hence the variety of God's dealing with his children, but the end is the same in all—preparation for their place in the temple of God. Here the promise is not simply to make his children "lively stones" in that temple, but to make them pillars or buttresses in it. That is to give them a most prominent and conspicuous place.—(See App. A. 31.) Certain pillars in the temple were named.

He shall go no more out.—"He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."—(Ps. lv. 22.) As part of Christ's body, as "lively stones" in the heavenly temple, the redeemed in heaven can never again fall away.

I will write upon him the name of my God.—That is, he shall bear my mark. It was customary for soldiers to bear the mark of their leader, slaves of their masters, and the idolater of his god. In the East, it is still a main part of the matin toilet to paint the sign of their god on the forehead. Thus does prophecy illustrate itself through the dim shadows of Eastern customs and the passing events of history. In the 8th of Rev., as elsewhere, we find that the soldiers of truth are marked or sealed by the Holy Spirit; while the Spirit of Error, who has for every act of truth his counter act, likewise marks his followers.—(Apo. xiii. 16, 17; xiv. 11; App. A.) Here, as throughout prophecy, we have the seen and the unseen combined; the one shadowing

14. And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

forth the other. The water of baptism is the "outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace."

14. *Laodicea*—Was one of the most opulent and considerable towns of Phrygia. Its original name was Diospolis; but Antiochus II., king of Syria, having enlarged it, called it Laodicea after his wife. It lay south of Philadelphia, and 120 miles E.S.E. of Smyrna. The seven churches lie in a circular form, so that they would be visited in the order observed by St John. Laodicea suffered much from earthquakes, and from the ravages of the Turks; and was early a scene of extensive ruins. It is now the abode of wolves, jackals, and foxes; "wretched, miserable, poor, and naked."—(v. 17.) This church was lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, therefore God "spued her out of his mouth." Not a single Christian remains. "Thy word is truth." "All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen."—(2 Cor. i. 20.) Though there is, through God's mercy, much vital religion abroad, there is likewise, in the great mass, even in our own land, but especially in Christendom, so much indifference and lukewarmness, that it is impossible to avoid the conclusion, that Laodicea was intended, amid other applications, as the type of the last church, that is, the church of the present day. We call the church of the present day the Last Church, because, on the authority of our best divines and deepest students of the sure word of prophecy, the time draws nigh when the "stone cut out without hands shall smite the image upon his feet of iron and clay, and shall break them to pieces." "And the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."—(Dan. ii. 35.) This mountain is the well-known symbol of the empire of Christ.—(See App. D. and Apo. xx.-xxii.) It is remarkable that Christ is represented here as "AT THE DOOR," words on which thousands of divines, both here and in other countries, now preach, showing his appearing to be imminent. Laodicea is loathsome in God's sight; the last apostate church shall be an "abhorring unto all flesh." Many other points of resemblance will be found in the sequel.

The Amen.—Literally, "It shall be so." "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever."—(Isa. xl. 8.) "Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away."—(Mark xiii. 31.)

15. I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

The faithful and true witness.—"Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people."—(Isa. lv. 4.) "Jesus answered, To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."—(John xviii. 37; Notes i. 5.) When the King of kings and Lord of lords comes on a white horse, to put down every enemy, in the day of the Lord, he is called "faithful and true."—(xix. 11.) Scripture abounds with words which thus link passage to passage, and bind the whole into one compact and solid fabric.

The beginning of the creation of God.—It is said of Christ, "All things were created by him and for him: he is before all things, and by him all things consist."—(Col. i. 16.) St Paul, in alluding to God's Son, adds, "by whom also he made the worlds."—(Heb. i. 2.) The word "beginning" might, with propriety, be rendered "Prince" or "Leader," as in Isa. lv. 4; Phil. ii. 9-11. God made Christ Lord of all creation. He is in all and through all. Let us so read creation, and not blindly grope our way through the dark chaos of secondary causes. The abstract is here put for the concrete; the beginning for Him from whom the beginning sprung.

15. *Thou art neither cold nor hot.*—The characteristic of this church was indifference: it is that of the age in which we live. One of the many signs of the last times is, "the form of godliness without the power." And "formalism" is one of the well-known signs of the times. The wonders of this world are neither few nor insignificant; but there is one that surpasses all. It is, that fallen and lost man should hear the glad tidings of the gospel, and yet remain indifferent and lukewarm about his salvation. Masses of mankind in the present age, like Laodicea, have neither "the anxiety of the earnest inquirer, nor the repose of the mature believer."

"Oh! ye cold-hearted frozen formalists!
On such a theme 'tis impious to be calm;
Passion is reason, transport temper, here.
Shall Heaven, which gave us ardour, and has shown
Her own for man so deeply, not disdain
What smooth emollients in theology
Recumbent Virtue's downy doctors teach?
That prose of piety, a lukewarm praise,
Rise odours sweet from incense uninflamed?
Devotion when lukewarm is undevout;
But when it glows, its heat is struck to Heaven.
To human hearts her golden harps are strung,
High Heaven's orchestra chants Amen to man."

I would thou wert cold.—"If ye were blind, ye should have no

16. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

17. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest sin.”—(John ix. 41.) “It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.”—(2 Pet. ii. 21.) “And that servant which knew his lord’s will and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes: but he that knew not and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.”—(Luke xii. 47.) “To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”—(Jas. iv. 17.) We often see the avowed enemy of God brought to repentance before the lukewarm friend.

16. *I will spue thee out.*—I will reject thee with the utmost loathing. “My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me.”—(Zech. xi. 8.) As the Jewish church was cast away, so shall the Gentile; and to this the words ultimately refer.

17. *Because thou sayest.*—These lukewarm Christians said; “We are rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.” But Christ, who judges righteous judgment, tells them, “Ye are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,” adding the climax of misfortune, “and knowest it not.” The followers of Christ are a “little flock” amid a great multitude. Their paths are utterly antagonistic,—even those of Truth and of Error. But the power of the many is ever exerted to make the few deviate from their narrow path. And there is no maxim more calculated to effect this, than that most dangerous one, “Do as others do; think as others think; walk as others walk; the many must be right.” “Oh! the presumption of man’s awe for man!” This is the Christian’s great snare, man’s awe for man,—against which he is taught to pray. And it will greatly assist our prayers, as well as clear our understanding and our path, if we continually contrast God’s estimates, judgments, and precepts, with those of the world. Let us do so in only a few instances:—

1st, God says, “One thing is needful,” the righteousness of Christ: the world deems one thing needful, but it is the mammon of unrighteousness.

2nd, Man calls the Apocalypse a “dark, obscure, and sealed

not that thou are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked :

18. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich ; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of

book :” God calls it “*The Revelation*”—“*The making clear*”—“*The unveiling*.” Man considers it should not be studied : God seven times declares it must be studied, and twice promises his blessing to every one who reads it. Man says, Prophecy is dark : God calls it “a sure light.”

3d, “Redeem the time” unto salvation, is God’s maxim. “Time is money,” one of the world’s.

4th, God says, “It is an honour to a man to cease from strife.” “It is man’s glory to pass over a transgression.”—(Prov. xix., xx.) The worldling deems forgiveness *want of honour*, and the mark of a poor and cowardly spirit. Well may it be said, “Seek not the honour that cometh from man.”

5th, God tells us that in the day of restitution, this false language will be corrected, then “the vile person shall no more be called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful.”—(Isa. xxxii. 5.) In the language of the world, who are the illiberal, and the uncharitable, and narrow-minded, but those who take, however erringly, the Bible as their standard, and indulge not in that looseness of words and actions which is often mistaken for the marks of a large and liberal mind, while in reality it is the sure sign of a weak and churlish one ?

6th, “They that spake often one to another of God, are counted among his jewels at the last day.”—(Mal. iii. 17.) With many this is almost a forbidden topic. The contrast might be extended almost *ad infinitum*. And we may take it as a sure guide, that “quod semper quod ubique, quod ab omnibus,” is a certain index of error. Truth has had few followers—“two witnesses” only (Apo. xi.), and they at one time totally silenced. The sons of Error, on the other hand, have been, in comparison, numerous as the sand on the sea-shore :—this the Apocalypse clearly reveals to us.

18. *Buy of me gold.*—This church said she was rich ; Christ tells her she is poor, because she lacked that of which her gold was but the symbol, and counsels her to buy “true riches,” “the unsearchable riches of Christ.” God says, “Riches and honour are with me ; yea, durable riches and righteousness : my fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold ; and my revenue than

thy nakedness do not appear ; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.

19. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten : be zealous therefore, and repent.

20. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock : if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

choice silver.”—(Prov. viii. 18.) In 1 Cor. iii. 12, we read of men building upon Christ as the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and stubble. And it is added, “The fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.” If any man’s work abide the test, “he shall receive a reward.” If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall “suffer loss.” It is evident, then, that having Christ as our foundation, refined gold—the symbol of tried religion—is the material with which we should build ; and we must buy it of Christ, that we “may be rich” and receive our reward.

Tried in the fire.—That is, purged of its dross and made pure. Our Lord counsels the church to have pure religion, such as will stand the most fiery trials.

Buy white raiment.—Each portion of the counsel given bears reference to the wants of these lukewarm Christians. They were naked, and are therefore told to buy white raiment.—(See Notes iii. 40.) They were blind, and are told to anoint their eyes that they may see. This eye-salve is to be purchased by the prayer, “Open thou mine eyes that I may see wondrous things out of thy law.” The gold, the raiment, and the eye of faith may all be had “without money and without price.” “Ask and ye shall receive : seek and ye shall find.”

19. *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.*—“Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”—(Heb. xii. 6.) Affliction is penal to the natural man, parental to the renewed.

20. *I stand at the door and knock.*—We learn from this verse that Christ stands at the door of every sinner’s heart, craving admission. And if any man open the door, Christ comes in and sups with him.—(Song of Solomon, v. 2.) Christ knocks at our hearts by the occurrences of every day and hour. Every moment that flies carries a warning voice and death-note with it, for every moment a soul is passing to the world of spirits. Every

21. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

22. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

thing around us is eloquent of Deity. We may hear God's voice in trees, see his wisdom in running brooks, read sermons in stones, and behold good in every thing. Christ knocks at our hearts by his word, his rod, his providences; by our conscience, reason, and affections. How shall we escape if we neglect to open?

I will sup with him.—Christ says, "He that cometh to me shall never hunger."—(John vi. 35.) "He shall make them sit down to meat."—(Luke xii. 37.) "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him."—(John xiv. 23.) Believers are the temples of the Holy Ghost. God dwelleth in them. "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."—(1 John iv. 16.) The ulterior application here is to the marriage supper of the Lamb, described Rev. xix. 9 and Luke xxii. 30.

21. *To him that overcometh will I grant a seat in my throne.*—Believers overcome the adversary by faith; and every victor shall be a joint-heir with Christ of the inheritance of the saints of light. "Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am." "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."—(Heb. i. 8.) "We have such an High-priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens."—(Heb. viii. 1.) We find Christ here, and throughout these epistles, promising to them that overcome, all the glories and honours which he himself enjoys in the kingdom of his Father. As he said, "The glory which thou hast given me, I have given them."—(John xvii.)

My throne.—Christ is enthroned on the right hand of the Majesty on high. He is enthroned in the heart of every believer; and he will ultimately be enthroned the universal Lord of that "kingdom," for which we all pray, in which all believers hope, and for which all creation groans.

GENERAL REMARKS.—The light of Truth, like natural light, sheds its rays universally. While, therefore, we would not limit these epistles to particular eras, it is easy to perceive that, besides their literal application, they select prominent chronological phases of the church from the first to the second advent, which again serve by their prominence to illustrate kindred phases in nations,

families, and persons. Thus, Ephesus points symbolically to the declension of the first church; Smyrna, to the persecution which followed; Pergamos, to the paganism and uncleanness which prevailed in the high places of the earth; Thyatira, to the arch-apostasy and spiritual adultery which succeeded; Sardis, to the subsequent deadness, wherein only a small remnant remained worthy; Philadelphia, to the purer church of love, having "a little strength," which God brought out of Egypt; Laodicea, to the last apostasy, which God rejects with loathing and abhorrence. Smyrna and Philadelphia alone receive favourable mention, accompanied by no threat. The suffering, poverty, and persecution of the one leads to the revival of the other; just as, in the first church, we see the beginning of that lukewarmness which we find consummated in the seventh and last church. These four seem connected, as do the three intermediate ones—the paganism and counterfeit Christianity of Pergamos and Thyatira blending to form the deadness of Sardis. The present position of Christendom mainly resembles that of Philadelphia and Laodicea; and it is from the necessary antagonism between these states that "distress of nations and perplexity" will arise. The spirit, however, of the five previous churches is also largely abroad. Of the last church alone is no favourable mention made. Its name—the people's justice—seems to point to the overthrowing of all rule and authority by the people, which, is so conspicuous a feature of the present day. The spirits now abroad "despise government, and speak evil of dignities." "Presumptuous are they, and self-willed, professing themselves wise they became fools." But Christ, we read, is "*at the door*"—the only true Reformer, for he says, "Behold I make all things new."

These epistles do not end here. They are closely interwoven with the whole book. Their words, promises, and prophecies recur again and again, for amplification, elucidation, and fulfilment. Thus, little by little, step by step, light is added, until all culminates in the blaze of the New Jerusalem.

CHAPTER IV.

1. After this I looked, and, behold, a door *was* opened in heaven : and the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me ; which

Ver. 1. *A door was opened in heaven.*—When Jacob in vision saw a ladder connecting heaven and earth, and angels ascending and descending, he exclaimed : “ This is none other but the house of God ; this is the gate of heaven.”—(Gen. xxviii. 17.) Our Saviour adds, “ Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”—(John i. 51.) John is to be shown the future ; and, in order to a right understanding thereof, he must learn whence that future has its impulse. Hence a door is opened in heaven, and the region of influence thereby connected with the region of events.—(Comp. Acts vii. 5, 6, and x. 11.) The veil had been rent ; hence the innermost recesses of the Holy of Holies is exhibited.—(Heb. x. 19, 20 ; ix. 8.) Ezekiel says, “ The heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.”—(i. 1.) Thus was heaven opened to John, he was invited to enter, and, being “ in the spirit,” he describes all its glories. St Paul says, “ Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling.”—(Heb. xii. 22.) To all this John, the representative of the earthly church, in spirit now came.

The first voice.—The voice which previously said, “ I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.”—(Apo. i. 11.) Our Lord Jesus christ, who there commanded John to write what he saw in a book, for the church, now says to him : Come up here, and I will show you the future history of the church and world. (For trumpet, see Notes i. 10.) “ I will show thee,” clearly

said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.

2. And immediately I was in the Spirit: and, be-

points to Christ; for He alone was able to open the prophetic scroll, and show its contents.

Things which must be hereafter.—Rather, “after these.” That is, the history of the church and world; or, in other words, the strife between Truth and Error from the first to the second advent. The main feature in this historic revelation is, the gradual and progressive triumph of Truth over the Adversary and his hosts. It depicts a continuous struggle between Christianity and the world. Christ and the Spirit of Truth command the one army; the Devil and the Spirit of Error, the other. The first opposing enemy depicted is Pagan Rome, chosen for its conspicuity, and as best illustrating every minor phase of evil; the second is Papal Rome, or the western Antichrist, now joined by the eastern and other Antichrists; the third enemy is Antichrist in his last concrete form. Prophecy is always expanding and increasing in intensity; the last form of Evil will therefore, judging from analogy, vastly exceed any thing we have yet had. Its presumption will even lead it to make war against “the King of kings.” Foreshadows of this coming impiety we have already had in France.

2. *In the Spirit.*—Under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. —(See Notes i. 10.) Ezekiel says: “The hand of the Lord God fell upon me. And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem.”—(Ezek. viii. 3; iii. 12.) St Paul says: “I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell); such an one caught up to the third heaven.” “How that he was caught up into paradise.”—(2 Cor. xii. See Ezek. i. 28; Zech. iv. 1; Dan. viii. 17–27; x. 9, 16, 17; vii. 15, 28.)

Throne in heaven.—Isaiah says: “I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.”—(Isa. vi. 1.) “And above the firmament was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man.” “This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.”—(Ezek. i. 26–28; x. 1.) Thus John, through the open door, saw the likeness of the throne of Jehovah, and on it sat the

hold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* sat on the throne.

3. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

likeness of the Lord of glory.—(See Apo. xx. 11; Dan. vii. 9–14.) We can only see God in Christ, “He being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person” (Heb. i. 3)—the seen here, as elsewhere, depicting the unseen. The scene before us was shadowed forth by the Jewish worship and tabernacle in the wilderness, which “serves unto the example and shadow of heavenly things.”—(Heb. viii. 5.) The Old Testament symbols, types, shadows, and language, are the sure and unerring interpreters of the Apocalypse. In addition to the passages quoted in our Notes, the reader may refer to Numbers ii. The Tabernacle of old contained all that St John here depicts. And round it encamped the whole visible church—Judah’s standard on the east, Ephraim’s on the west, Reuben’s on the south, and Dan’s on the north; and on the right and left of each standard was a tribe. This analogy is continued throughout the Apocalypse, and throughout the Bible; and the same divine arrangement pervades history and nature.

3. *He that sat.*—The Lord of glory appeared like a jasper and sardine stone; and “as the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about.”—(Ezek. i. 28.) The jasper is “a stone most precious, clear as crystal,” and the light of the heavenly Jerusalem is compared to it.—(Apo. xxi. 11.) Sardine stone is red like fire, and therefore a fit emblem of the Deity, “whose eyes were as a flame of fire.”—(i. 14.) The emerald, “the colour that prevails in creation, because softest and most suitable to the eye, indicates the softening influence of the humanity of Jesus on the rays of the otherwise inaccessible glory.”—*Cumming*.

There was a rainbow.—How aptly and beautifully placed, and what a volume of meaning is here. The flood of enemies foretold by our Lord (Matt. x. 34; Luke xii. 51, &c.) was coming upon the church and world; but here is the covenant-promise that the true church shall come unscathed from amid the impending desolations. Christ was about to send the darkest cloud that earth had ever seen (Dan. xii. 1); but, according to his promise, the bow of reassurance is shown.—(Gen. ix. 8–17.) “Therefore,” sings the church, “will we not fear though the earth be moved,

4. And round about the throne *were* four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

5. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings,

and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."
—(Ps. xlii. 2; Ezek. i. 26–28.)

4. *Four and twenty seats.*—The correct translation is, "Round about the thrones four and twenty thrones," the same Greek word being used in both cases. "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them."—(John xvii. 22.) "They shall sit with me on my throne."—(iii. 21.)

Four and twenty elders.—This is the number of the patriarchs and apostles, and may denote the completeness of the church and the unity of the Jewish and Gentile churches. Jesus said to his disciples: "Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."—(Matt. xix. 28.) The elders are in the costume and attitude of conquerors; and have realised the promises made to all "who overcome" in the addresses. They are "kings and priests unto God and his Father, and shall reign on the earth."—(Apo. i. 6; v. 10.) As conquerors, they wear the laurel wreath of pure and tried religion; and as priests, they are clothed in white raiment, the dress of the priesthood and the righteousness of saints.—(Notes iii. 4.) The heads of the twenty-four courses of the Jewish priesthood represented the whole body: so these four and twenty elders are the heads or representatives of the redeemed church in heaven.—(1 Chron. xxiv. 1–4.) "The emphatic meaning of the whole verse should be noted. Angels stand in the attitude of ministering servants (see Rev. viii. 2); the redeemed sit on thrones in the presence of God."—(Stuart.) "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? Know ye not that we shall judge angels?"—(1 Cor. vi. 3.) These elders hold the prayers of saints, not as mediators, but as representatives (v. 8); and they explain the visions to the seer.—(v. 5, vii. 13, &c.)

5. *Lightnings, and thunderings, and voices.*—Thus the Lord appeared on Sinai. "There were thunders and lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud."—(Exod. xix. 16.) When a voice spake from heaven, the people said, "it thundereth." The noise of the wings of Ezekiel's (i. 24) four living creatures was "as the voice of the Almighty." The three

and thunderings, and voices: and *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

6. And before the throne *there was* a sea of glass

words are, we believe, a brief preintimation and warning of the coming seals, trumpets, and vials. We have precisely the same of the four first trumpets.—(Apo. viii. 5.) It is the rule of the Apocalypse first to give the whole in brief, and then supply details *seriatim*.

Seven lamps of fire, which are the seven spirits of God.—The seven spirits of God are the Holy Spirit, as explained, i. 4. On the day of Pentecost, “tongues like as of fire sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.”—(Acts ii. 3.) “As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps.”—(Ezek. i. 13.) The seven-branched candelabra, in the Old Testament, shadowed forth these seven lamps.—(Heb. viii. 5.) The temporary dispensations, one and all, shadow forth the eternal ones, without being their express image.—(Heb. x. 1.) Whether we see it or not, there is nothing in Holy Writ or in nature, which does not contain a far-ranging lesson.

6. *Sea of glass.*—Typified by “the molten sea” made by Solomon in his temple (1 Kings vii. 23) for sacrifices, the purification of the priests and of their utensils.—(2 Chron. iv. 6; Exod. xxx. 18-21.) It held about 16,000 gallons of water, and stood before the throne of the mercy seat—the one cleansed for the earthly temple, the other for the heavenly. Farther information regarding this glassy sea, which, like all of old, was a shadow, not the express image (Heb. x. 1) of things yet future, is given us in xv. 2. It is there mingled with fire, and “seems to represent, not only the water used in baptism, but that also which the water represents, the blood of the Redeemer.”—(Woodhouse.) Two things are necessary to baptism, water and the Spirit, of which fire is the constant emblem. There is a further reference in it, as commentators admit, to the Red Sea; while, in the heavenly vision—meet emblem of that precious fountain prepared for all sin and all uncleanness—it mirrored love upon its placid bosom. It is the contrast to the troubled sea of this life, of which much hereafter, and in which all are lost, while in the heavenly sea all are saved.

In the midst of the throne and round about it.—None but Deity could be in the midst of the throne, none but the supporters of Deity round about it. God said, “I will commune with thee

like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, *were* four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

from between the cherubims."—(Exod. xxv. 22. See next note.)

Four beasts.—In other words, the cherubim. Four beasts should be translated "four living creatures," or intelligences. Græce ζῶα, not θηρία, which is correctly rendered beast in Apo. xiii., xvii. "The former is of good; the other, in the original Greek, of evil."—(Williams.) The four words, "lion, ox, man, eagle," convey more meaning than a detailed narrative, and show the Godlike brevity of Holy Writ. The kingly lion implies indomitable courage, avenging might, and strength, "conquering and to conquer." The ox, a vigorous, patient, unwearyed toiler,—type of priesthood.—(Deut. xxv. 4; 1 Cor. ix. 9-11; 1 Tim. v. 17, 18.) The eagle, the Spirit first descending and then soaring heavenward, and bearing its offspring, the church, on its wings. Fit emblems of the King, the Priest, and the Spirit, the three uncreated with whom man is joined: by the decree of the first, by the blood of the second, and by the breath of the third, made "joint-heirs with Christ." We have, then, in these four emblems a compendious description of the church and her communion with Jehovah, and an admirable example of the use of symbols. Here, as throughout prophecy, we find truth communicated to us, not only verbally, but by numerous representations, acts, and symbols, full of deep meaning. The four living creatures of St John's Apocalypse resemble, in almost every particular, the four living creatures of Ezekiel's Apocalypse, as described in his first and tenth chapters. Woodhouse enumerates eight points of resemblance. Ezekiel prophesied of the earthly blessing and glory—John of the heavenly. Both predict a city—the one, the earthly Jerusalem, the other, the heavenly. The points of resemblance are:—in both prophecies, the creatures appear in the "midst" and around the throne, as its occupants and supporters—Deity the occupant, man the supporter.—(Rev. iii. 21; v. 9.) Their countenances, in both, are the same,—that of a lion, a man, an ox, and an eagle; their wings are similar, and their bodies are in each case "full of eyes." Ezekiel adds, "And I knew them to be the cherubims." The Holy Spirit, therefore, plainly tells us that St John's four living creatures are the cherubim. So far seems clear; but there is much darkness among commentators as to what these four beasts, or cherubim, are. Some suppose them "the name of an office to which the redeemed are raised;" others, the four gospels. Moses Stuart and others

7. And the first beast *was* like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had

consider "that the living creatures do not symbolise men and angels, but simply denote the ubiquity, omniscience, omnipotence, and ever watchful providence of God." But if so, would they sing, "Thou hast redeemed us out of every kingdom, tongue, and nation, and people"?—(v. 9.) Others, not seeing the possibility of redeemed men being *on* God's throne, as St John states, alter the text, and say that they are only *under* and *around* the throne. It will clear our way to truth if we go back to the first institution of the cherubim. After the fall, God drove man out of paradise, "lest he should find his way to the tree of life, and eat and live for ever; and He placed cherubims and a flaming sword to keep the way of the tree of life."—(Gen. iii. 24.) At the same time, God opened up to man another and far better way by which he might eat and live for ever—Christ, "the way, the truth, the life; the only name under heaven by which men can be saved." And the very means which kept the way to the tree of life was made emblematic, and therefore prophetic, of "the new and only way." Writing was then unknown, and, although God conferred personally with man, still verbal orders are soon forgotten, and, therefore, all knowledge and instruction was conveyed to him by figures, emblems, and types. They were *permanent*, and even present instructors, and under them man could not plead forgetfulness. Now, the new way to the tree of life lay in and through Christ. He was even prophesied of as the "joined one."—(App. B.) We are "joint-heirs" with Him, and we eat his body and drink his blood, that "He may dwell in us and we in Him." For the completion of this junction, or unity, our Lord prayed, "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."—(John xvii. 21; 1 Cor. vi. 17.) Now, of this junction, or unity, the cherubim were emblems. In them we see man received into the glory of the godhead.—(John xvii. 22.) The cherubim taught, in brief, all that the Mosaic ritual and gospel dispensation have since taught in full. They were four in number, but one in form; for we read that they "had the likeness of a man."—(Ezek. i. 5.) Their symbolic teaching and their song equally point to the creative energy of God. And the church militant replies: "For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven."—(2 Cor. v. 2.) But the cherubim having been used in the first paradise to depict man's predicted exaltation into unity with the godhead, the emblem is most appropriately again chosen by St John to depict, in the second paradise, the completion of the prophecy

a face as a man, and the fourth beast *was* like a flying eagle.

contained in the original emblem. In fine, the four beasts, or cherubim, the most ancient of all symbolic figures, represent the redeemed church, clothed with the glory of Deity. "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one."—(John xvii. 22.) While the seraphim are the angelic hosts—for they are not once called redeemed, nor in their songs do they thank God for their redemption,—the glorious attributes with which fallen man, in virtue of God's promise, "Thou shalt bruise his head," was to be arrayed, could only be conveyed to him in the language of the day—that of symbols; and what more fitting than those chosen?—the lion, the King; the ox, the Priest; the eagle, the Spirit. And where, as in the case of man, no symbol was necessary, none is used. It has, we think, been rightly supposed that every thing in Eden was vocal with instruction, and that all was typical of a better paradise. This is not only consonant with all analogy, but St Paul says, "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made."—(Rom. i. 20.) If so, Adam must have been intimately acquainted with the language of symbols, as he evidently was with the characteristics of animals; for we find him naming them with accurate reference thereto. He would, therefore, readily understand this first dim prophet. We who have, in the abundance of our light, greatly lost the language of symbols, have hence great difficulty in understanding either the cherubim or the Apocalypse. But, even granting that Adam's training was not such as we suppose, faith could enable him to read the gospel more clearly in the cherubim than men without faith can read it in the New Testament. We should observe the difference between the symbols of God and those of man: the former are discernible only to the eye of faith; thus is idolatry obviated and faith nourished. The latter are suited to the natural eye, and are one of Error's many modes of enchaining his victims by blinding them to Truth. The hosts of effigies, images, and pictures, which we find in the synagogue of Antichrist, are but the Adversary's counterplot for the symbols which God has placed in the temple of nature. Many children of God are very apt to shrink from a truth because it has been abused. But this is one of Satan's favourite devices. Where he cannot wholly stifle truth in the hearts of God's people, he seeks to scare them from it by its abuse.—(See App. A.)

7. *Lion, calf, man, eagle.*—Jewish tradition says that the

8. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about *him* ; and *they were* full of eyes within : and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

standards of the four marching divisions bore on them one of these cherubic forms. Dr Cumming, therefore, "supposes that the four living creatures refer more immediately," though, of course, not exclusively, the wall of partition being removed, "to the Jewish church." While the four and twenty elders, not signalled by Jewish symbols, "possibly represent more immediately the Gentile church." We should, however, observe that man is the head of creatures ; the lion, of wild beasts ; the ox, of cattle ; and the eagle, of birds. These symbolic figures, therefore, besides the meaning assigned them in the previous note, probably point to renewed creation, the basis of Christ's coming kingdom. It is as if we here saw in brief redeemed creation, and Christ enthroned on it, King of kings and Lord of lords, as more fully detailed in chapters xx.—xxii. ; while the elders represent Christ's assessors in judgment—(Notes iv. 4, and xx. 4)—the heads of the church triumphant—the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb. The two are intimately connected, and unite to form one chorus (ver. 8), while the angels form the other (ver. 11).—See General Remarks.

8. *Full of eyes.*—The glorified church is made like unto her Lord.—(John xvii. 22.) He, too, is full of eyes ; equivalent to having "seven eyes."—(Apo. v. 6.) Christ is the light,—that light the church receives and reflects, as the moon that of the sun. Moon is the well-known symbol of the church ; sun, of her Lord. The garment of the high-priest was full of eyes, as were Ezekiel's cherubim.—(x. 12.) Isaiah says, "Each one had six wings ; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly ; and one cried unto the other, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts."—(vi. 2.) To this day, in the East, no grandee, male or female, goes abroad without his supporters, who cry one to the other, and proclaim to the public, the characteristics and titles of their lord and master. The cherubim and seraphim, the redeemed and angelic hosts, commonly appear together, as in Apo. v. Thus, our *Te Deum*, "To thee cherubim and seraphim continually do cry, Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth." The words, "With twain he covered his face," probably suggested the lines,

9. And when those beasts give glory, and honour, and thanks, to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

10. The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory,

"The saint that wears heaven's brightest crown,
In deepest adoration bends;
The weight of glory bows him down
The most when most his soul ascends.
Nearest the throne itself must be
The footstool of humility."

The sublimest portions of human poetry may be traced to divine.

1-8.—We should compare the arrangement of this heavenly scene with that of the Jewish tabernacle and encampment, for they exactly correspond. The throne takes the place of the Holy of Holies: before it stood the sea or laver, and the seven lamps, which are the seven Spirits of God. Round about the throne was the ark of the covenant or rainbow, and the twenty-four elders or courses of priests. And on the four quarters, the four beasts or standards, indicating the whole Israel of God.

8-11.—We have, in these verses, the first anthem, or choral song, which occurs in the Apocalypse. There are seven such anthems. They will be noticed as we proceed. These choral songs introduce the several scenes, by giving an outline of the coming prophecy. This is the structure of the Apocalypse throughout. A general outline is given, and then fuller descriptions, embracing minute details, are afterwards vouchsafed. For instance, chapter xvii. is only a repetition, in greater detail, of chapter xiii., and chapters xxi. and xxii. of chapter xix. The prophecies "are all related to each other, and every following prophecy adds something new to the former."—(*Sir I. Newton.*) This structure, peculiar to all the prophecies of Scripture, "creates new interest as the prophecy advances, by at once conveying to the mind a general impression of what is coming, and afterwards gratifying it with fuller information."—(*Hoare.*) The Apocalypse is but Daniel's outline of the history of the fourth kingdom perfected. "The substance of this anthem is to be

and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

found in the Jewish prayer which invariably opened the service of the synagogue; also in our *Te Deum*, and the *Sanctus* of the communion service." "We have thus in this song the theme which has animated the church in all ages."—(*Hoare.*)

GENERAL REMARKS.—This and the following chapter reveal to us God in alliance with creation, of which Christ is heir, and man joint-heir. The object of this alliance is declared by Him who sits on the throne—"Behold I make all things new." To this end the seals are broken, and to it the whole Apocalypse tends. In virtue of having paid the price of redemption, our Lord exercises all power. He guides, directs, and impels creation to its destined end and elevation. Hence He is termed "The Leader of the creation of God."—(Notes iii. 14.) He undertook to redeem from Satan unto God man's lost inheritance, at the costly price of his own blood. This had been paid; but the Adversary was still to be driven out, chained, and bound, without which the re-Genesis could not take place. Hence the impending war—Christ claims the earth, and the Adversary puts forth his counter-claim, and does battle. The sealed book is the book of the Lamb's inheritance, and of the ways and means used in its repurchase. And as the Jewish tabernacle and polity typified this heavenly scene, so does it, in its ultimate application, briefly rehearse that kingdom wherein Christ shall reign on Mount Zion and before his ancients gloriously. This scene is consummated in chapters xx.—xxii. There the New Jerusalem descends from the heaven here opened. To the thrones here set for the elders, judgment is there added, and they are termed priests and kings. Here is the promise of reigning—there the fulfilment. Here all is knowledge—there all fruition.

CHAPTER V.

1. And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

Ver. 1.—*A book written within and without.*—Ezekiel says, “Behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo! a roll of a book was therein; and he spread it before me, and it was written within and without, and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.”—(ii. 9.) The Egyptian papyrus, the most ancient paper, was too brittle to fold; hence it was rolled up. (It is the same now with some of the paper found in the East, especially Chinese paper.) Rolling was, therefore, unavoidable. To this day the practice largely prevails; and writing within and without on such rolls, is the invariable custom. Indeed, so strong is the habit, that late attempts to repress it in our own Eastern dominions have failed. This sealed book contained a prophecy of the future. Such St John understood it; hence his anxiety lest it should not be opened. He wept. It was in God’s right hand, as were the seven stars (i. 20); thereby implying his power, guidance, and direction. “This book is a manuscript pictorial roll.”—(*Delta*.) The word used is βιβλίον, a diminutive of βιβλος, contrasted with βιβλαριδιον.—(Apo. x. 9.) The one a small book, the other a smaller. The probable nature of this scroll will be best understood by our Chart, and by the various remarks made thereon, as we proceed. In forming this Chart, we allowed ourselves to be wholly guided by Scripture, having had no preconceived system to work out. “To the law and to the testimony,” was our only rule.—(See Notes x. 2.)

Sealed with seven seals.—Perfectly sealed; so that “no man in heaven nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book.”—(See Notes i. 4.) Each seal contained a separate prophecy. The seals denote secrecy; while Christ alone being able to open them, denotes his ownership, which a seal

2. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

3. And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither

usually implied. This he had in virtue of his atonement, as "the Lamb slain," whereby he purchased back, at the costly price of his own blood, the inheritance lost to us by the first Adam. A sealed book was, among the Jews, the sign of an inheritance. It was customary to give a sealed paper to the redeemer of land as a proof of his title.—(Jer. xxxii. 6-15.) The analogy is obvious. These seven seals contain, in brief, the entire Apocalypse. That opened, "the Revelation" was made and finished. All else that is graciously vouchsafed merely amplifies and gives in full details the information epitomised in the seals. Hence *seven seals*, and no more. The rest of the Apocalypse could not with propriety be sealed; for, when the seventh seal was broken, all was disclosed. The prophecy was no longer a sealed one. We learn from this and every prophecy, that all the designs of God's providence are fixed, predetermined, and even recorded, for man's guidance. What infinite and godlike mechanism must be required to make all work together to the destined consummation! And where, in so stupendous a scheme, shall "chance," or accident, find place? The scroll being rolled up, how, it may be asked, were the seven seals visible? According to our mode of sealing, this seems inexplicable; but, in the East, each document is bound with a silken cord, at the end of which hangs the seal. In the scroll before us, each vision forming a separate subject, would naturally have its separate cord and seal appended thereto.

2. *Strong angel*.—Gabriel means, "God is my strength." It was this angel who "came forth to give Daniel skill and understanding."—(Dan. ix. 22.) And as the Apocalypse takes up and completes Daniel's prophetic outline of the fourth kingdom, or the Roman empire, it is probable that the angel Gabriel is here referred to.

3. *Neither under the earth*.—"The expression heaven, earth, and under the earth, denote, by the common *usus loquendi* of the Hebrews, the universe."—(Stuart.) No created being in the universe could open the book.

No man could open the book.—No one in heaven, nor in earth, nor under the earth, was able to reveal the prophecies in the

under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

4. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

5. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root

book, or had a right and title to break the seals, save Christ. "No man was found worthy to open and read the book, neither to look thereon." The word "man" is not in the original. It should be, "no created being in heaven nor in earth," &c. Christ's promise to the church was, "Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth."—(John xvi. 13.) And He now stood, "a Lamb as it had been slain," to fulfil this promise.

Things under the earth.—In the invisible world. "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth."—(Phil. ii. 10.) We are told that "Christ died to the end that he might be Lord both of the dead and living."—(Rom. xiv. 9.) Evil angels are "reserved under darkness."—(Jude 6; 2 Pet. ii. 4.)

4. *I wept much.*—St John is considered by most commentators to be the representative of the Christian church on earth; as such, he weeps. The loss to the church would have been untold. The Omega of Holy Writ, in which all Scripture is wound up, in the most sublime and lofty strains that poetry and truth can reach, would have been lost. Well might the church, through their representative, weep such a loss. "Yet who is now grieved that he cannot understand these prophecies?"—(Bishop Newton.)

5. *One of the elders.*—(See Notes iv. 4.) The elders were the representatives of the redeemed church in heaven. John is the representative of the redeemed church on earth. As explained (Intro. v. 5), a sympathy exists between them, and is shown here in the "weep not" of the elder.

The Lion of the tribe of Judah.—It is said, "Judah is a lion's whelp: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?"—(Gen. xlix. 9.) "Behold the people"—Israel—"shall rise up as a great lion, and lift himself up as a young lion."—(Num. xxiii. 24.) "And the remnant of Jacob

of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

6. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having

shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people, as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep."—(Micah v. 8.) Thus, under the symbol of a lion, the Holy Spirit foretells the superior rank and position of Judah in and through Christ. This was partially fulfilled in David and his successors, and will be completed in Christ. That our Saviour is here intended, is evident from "the root of David." Jesus says, "I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."—(Apo. xxii. 16.) Christ having existed from the beginning, is the root of David—Jesus is the offspring of David. He is also called by Isaiah the root of Jesse, David being the son of Jesse.—(Isa. xi.) St Paul says, "It is evident our Lord sprang out of Judah."—(Heb. vii. 14.) The lion, as king of the forest and of surpassing strength, is an apt emblem of the King of kings. Every word is burdened with the import of the coming strife and its issues. The Lion must go on conquering and to conquer. David, the man of war, subdued all enemies, much more will Christ.—(Apo. xix. 11–21).

Hath prevailed.—"That is, hath acquired this power as the result of a conflict or struggle." "The word *ἐνίκησεν* refers to such a conflict, in which he was victor."—(Barnes).

6. *Stood a Lamb as it had been slain.*—Emblem of spotless innocence, of heavenly food for the souls of men, and a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. "John seeth Jesus and saith, Behold the Lamb of God."—(John i. 29, 36.) Isaiah says, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter."—(Isa. liii. 7.) The Lamb, then, is our Saviour: he is so called about thirty times in this book. He stands in the midst of the throne, the place of Deity, and bears on his person those marks of love and suffering which endear him above all others to fallen man. It is as if he said, "Behold my hands and my feet!" And the response of the church is, "My Lord and my God." "The prophecies of the Old Testament describe our Lord both as an abject sufferer and as a triumphant conqueror. Though this was dark and mysterious to the Jews, the issue has shown the truth of those descriptions."—(Woodhouse.) The prophets, in fact, saw in one vista or glance the abasement and the glory of our Lord. But the Jews

seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

7. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

8. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four *and* twenty elders fell down before

overlooked the one, and dwelt wholly on the other. "The word *ισπαγμειν*, here rendered 'as it had been slain,' means literally, killed in sacrifice, as if just newly killed, and conveys, beyond the power of English language, the continual freshness of the atoning efficacy of the blood of Jesus, and teaches us the precious truth that there is the same virtue in the atonement at this moment as when first made. Years do not waste its virtue, and the successive millions that have drawn from it do not exhaust its fulness." —(Cumming).

Seven horns.—Horn is the symbol of power, conquest, dominion. Seven horns symbolise the fulness or universality or catholicity of our Saviour's sway. Ornaments resembling horns were and are still worn in the East on the forehead.

Seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God.—(See Notes i. 4; iv. 5.) Zechariah says, "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the earth."—(iii. 9; iv. 10.) "God is an universal eye," is an Eastern proverb. And with the Egyptians, the eye was one of the symbols of Deity.

7. *Came and took the book.*—We have precisely the same vision in Dan. vii. 9–14. One like unto the Son of Man comes to the Ancient of Days, and receives from him a kingdom, and dominion, and glory, which shall not pass away, and shall never be destroyed.

8. *Fell down before the Lamb.*—At the sanctification of the temple, 'The king, and all that were present with him, bowed themselves and worshipped; and the Levites had harps, and cymbals, and psalteries. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments. And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang.'—(2 Chron. xxix.) The cases do not appear perfect parallels, but some of the features are similar. Scripture is, however, the perfection of unity, and though we see it not now, we shall hereafter know that it is connected in every word, perfect alike in its boundlessness and in its unity.

Harps.—David says for himself and for the church, "Unto

the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel."—(Ps. lxxi. 22.) And in his last psalm but one, where he calls upon the saints to be joyful in glory, and to sing unto the Lord a "new song," it is with timbrel and with "harp." Throughout Holy Writ, the harp is the emblem of joy and gladness.—(2 Chron. xxix. 25; Ps. xcii. 3.)

Golden vials full of incense.—"The 'vials' of the Old Testament appear to be basins, on which were deposited before the altar the offerings of meal or incense."—(*Woodhouse*.) At the dedication of the temple, the twelve princes of Israel offered their offering before the altar: one spoon of ten shekels of gold full of incense.—(Num. vii.) Of the incense we are told, "He made the holy anointing oil, and the pure incense of sweet spices."—(Exod. xxxvii. 29.) "And Aaron shall take a censer, and his hands full of sweet incense; and he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat."—(Lev. xvi. 12.) God says, "I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries into desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours."—(Lev. xxvi. 31.) "Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination unto me."—(Isa. i. 13.) St Paul calls the "sacrifice" of the Philippians "an odour of a sweet smell, well-pleasing to God."—(Phil. iv. 18.) (See Notes viii. 3; 1 Kings vii. 50; 2 Chron. iv. 22.) The offerings of incense were always accompanied by prayer: so that prayer and incense are synonymous.

The prayers of saints.—Some, fleeing Romish errors, suppose these saints to be the elders, and that it is their own prayers they offer. But because men pervert truth, that is no reason why we should desert it. The original word is *αγιοι*, sanctified ones but not perfected. Had the saints in heaven been intended, *δικαιοι*, justified and glorified ones, would have been used. One duty of the earthly priest, or representative of the people, was to offer incense or prayer. So one duty of the elders, the representatives of the redeemed in heaven, may be to hold the golden vials of heaven, full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. Prayer is made to God alone, but He may direct his ministers to hold it as incense before Him, and to treasure it up in his vials. David says, "Put thou my tears into thy bottle."—(Ps. lvi. 8.) "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up as a memorial before God."—(Acts x. 4.) We have, perhaps, an insight here into the glorified church in its priestly office. We here too see the intimate connection which exists between the Region of Influence and the Region of Events. St Paul's splendid exhortation to the soldiers

9. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ;

of truth, to prepare for the coming warfare, ends with, "praying always with all prayer."—(Eph. vi. 10–18.) The same order is followed here. Without prayer, the armies of truth cannot go on "conquering and to conquer." Angel-worship is the least tenable of Rome's errors, as a perusal of Hebrews will convince us. "See thou do it not," said the angel to St John, "for I am thy fellow-servant; worship God."—(See Notes viii. 1–4.) As the beasts and elders here preserve the incense or prayers of God's children, so do others preserve his vials of wrath.—(Rev. xv. 7 ; xvi. 1).

9. *Kindred, tongue, people, nation.*—In these words, as throughout prophecy, we see the gradual progressive expansion, which is its rule: *Nihil per saltum*. Each word has a larger and wider meaning. The whole language of the chapter points to universality ; there is no bordering on limitation.

9–14.—We have in these verses the second anthem which occurs in the Apocalypse.—(See Notes iv. 8–11.) The choristers are those referred to in Heb. xii. 22, "The general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, the spirits of just men made perfect, and an innumerable company of angels." The anthem is triplicate. The first part by the church, the second by the church and the angels, the third by every creature in heaven, earth, and sea. So we had in the previous chapter the "Thrice Holy"—the epistle on Trinity Sunday.

New song.—In Psalms xcvi. and cxlix., we have two new songs, intimately connected with each other, and with the new song before us. They all equally refer to the triumph of our Saviour, and his joint-heirs, the redeemed, over the powers of darkness: the grand issue being, "we shall reign on the earth." The "new" may also have reference to the Lamb newly slain, exerting his right and power to open up a new Apocalypse, which called for a fresh song of praise and thanksgiving. David says, "He hath put a new song into my mouth, even praise unto our God."—(Ps. xl. 3 ; xcvi. 1 ; cxliv. 9 ; Isa. xlii. 10).

Thou wast slain.—This is the sun of Christianity ; round it the whole system revolves.

10. And hast made us unto our God kings and priests : and we shall reign on the earth.

11. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders : and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands ;

12. Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

10. *Kings and priests.*—In the epistles to the seven churches, it will be found that our Saviour promises to every victor a share in the glory which he himself enjoys, concluding with, “I will grant to him to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame.”—(Apo. iii. 21). What infinite condescension is here, and what an inheritance awaits us ! Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ ! The further to assure us of this promise, we find the redeemed in heaven declaring, “Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests : and we shall reign on the earth.” Christ is a king and priest, and the redeemed as his joint-heirs are kings and priests also. “Such honour have all his saints.”—(Ps. cxlix.) “The glory which thou hast given me, I have given them.”—(John xvii. 22).

Reign on the earth—May be rendered “over the earth.”—(See chap. xx.) Here we again see how repeatedly the Holy Spirit gives us in brief, what is afterwards to be fully detailed. The words, “We shall reign on the earth,” are expanded into the four last chapters. The Apocalypse is line upon line, precept upon precept. In almost every verse, this system of continuous expansion is apparent.

11–14.—Ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of angels now take up the flying anthem, and sing, “Worthy is the Lamb.” And then all creation “which now groaneth and travaileth in pain” (Rom. viii.), swells this sublime chorus with “blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.” And the four living creatures—the congregation of heaven—(Notes iv. 7)—say, Amen ; and the elders or priests of heaven fall down and worship him that reigneth for ever and ever. Daniel also (vii. 10) describes this scene. St Paul says, “Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, that at the name of

13. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.

14. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four *and* twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth."—(Phil. ii. 10.) David gives us this anthem, "All nations shall call him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen and amen."—(Ps. lxxii.) No part of Scripture proves the godhead of our Saviour more clearly than this chapter.* For the general bearing of this and the previous chapter, see Introductions.

* Some writers make a singular deduction from this chapter. "The whole language of the chapter," say they, "points to Christ as the Redeemer of the church.—(Lev. xxv.) He was to redeem the possession forfeited by Adam. He became the kinsman of his people, by taking their nature upon him,—'these are my mother, my sisters, and brothers.' The sealed book, therefore, could only be opened by him; he had repurchased the lost inheritance, and he, therefore, was alone entitled to break the seals." Thus far they are perfectly correct, and no one will gainsay them. But add they:—"The opening of prophetic visions is not, therefore, involved in this ceremony; any prophet might open and declare their contents." But because our Lord acts here as Redeemer, does it follow that he cannot act as prophet also? Is he not prophet, priest, and king? judge, mediator, and advocate? the Lamb of God, and yet the King of kings? Because he exercises one function of his office, must he necessarily be quiescent in all others? It is a singular feature in prophetic interpretation, that commentators, having hit upon the one solution or application of the sacred text which pleases them most, reject all others, forgetting that the applications of Scripture are manifold, and its scope and meaning vast. Their differences thus very much assume the nature of the disquisition about the colour of the chameleon. The narrowness of the human, and the vastness of the Divine, mind are, in all these instances, set forth in admirable contrast. We believe that the vision of the seer ranges from the scene immediately before him, down to that glorious era which is here shadowed forth, when the inheritance lost by the first Adam shall be finally and for ever redeemed by the Second; and that its intermediate applications are infinite, even to all who in every age have and shall appropriate the numerous heartstirring lessons which it contains.

CHAPTER VI.

1. And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come.

Ver. 1. In virtue of his atonement, and in fulfilment of his promise, "I will show you things to come," the Lamb opens a seal. One of the living creatures cries to the commissioned spirit, "Come." The words "and see," are not in the best versions. "Come," therefore, applies to the ministering spirit, who is thus summoned from amidst the assembled hosts, and who bears from God the mission of the first seal, and not to St John; to whom the voice of thunder and the cry are inapplicable, he having been already called.—(iv. 1.) In further proof thereof, we may remark, that the cry is only addressed to the commissioned spirits of the four first seals, who direct the warfare between truth and error. Their mission arranged, the cry ceases. *Kai ἴδε*, "and see," is not found in any version in v. 3. Some read *καὶ βλέπει*. The lion, the symbol of God, calls forth the first spirit, which is appropriate, for we elsewhere read, "The Spirit of truth proceedeth from the Father." The symbol of our High-Priest calls forth the second spirit, with the sword; and he himself says, "I came not to send peace, but a sword"—alluding evidently to the strife with the powers of darkness which the gospel dispensation awoke.

The Lamb opened one seal.—The first seal portrays the mystery of godliness. But, as explained, Sketch 14, prophecy selects prominent passing events to explain its burden, and thus the ever present events of history are made prophetic of the future; for 'God has made things visible to declare the invisible.'—(Rom. i. 20.) We have, therefore, every reason to suppose that St John, like all the older prophets, will illustrate his visions by prominent passing events. And such precisely do we find it. The seven existing churches were made to illustrate the universal church, down to Christ's coming; and the passing

events of history are now used to illustrate each vision: the language equally suiting the shadows and fulfilments.—(Sketch 15.) And first, as to the shadow. The warhorse was the symbol of Rome, just as the rose is that of England, the dove that of Assyria, the shamrock that of Ireland, and the lily that of France. It was sacred to their father Mars, and was on their coins and standards; while white was the emblem, and a crown the reward, of their triumphs and victories. The era, then, portrayed in this vista is clearly one of triumph and victory. The words, “a crown is given, and conquering and to conquer,” give us its entire history, and forbid our giving place to any non-kindred event. On the immediate foreground of this vista, lies “the golden age of Rome,”—from Nerva to Antoninus Aurelius. Tacitus calls it the “most blissful age.” Gibbon describes it as one of liberty, conquest, and triumph; of just rule, wisdom, and virtue. “The emperors,” he adds, “delighted in the image of liberty, and were pleased with considering themselves the accountable ministers of the laws.” They all died in peace, and received divine honours. The columns of Trajan and Aurelius still attest the commencing and closing triumphs of this age. Kings and princes bowed at their feet, and “every day the astonished senate received the intelligence of *new names and new nations* that acknowledged his (Trajan’s) sway.” In it, however, persecutions occurred; a most severe one from A.D. 161 to 180. They belong to the next seal, which is one of persecution and blood. The prophetic streams embrace only homogeneous events. God makes one stratum of history typify a subsequent one; and kindred events are linked together so as to connect the immediate present with the coming future and the end of all things. Thus the Region of Influence is linked to the Region of Events by a continuous chain of types; and all nature, all history, and all Scripture, unite to form above, around, below, and within us, a hidden power, whose unceasing tendency is to lead man, step by step, to truth. But this golden age of Rome is only the “potsherd” of the vista (Sketch 14); the first shadow which serves to illustrate the entire vision, and is itself connected with a *continuous* stream of kindred and equally illustrative events. In this vast and unbroken stream, we cannot enumerate every component particle, we can but point out a few of the more prominent ones, as we have done in the pictorial sketch of the first seal. There its vista is set forth, like a mountain-chain rising higher and higher, “till it is lost amid the serene skies of the latter-day glory.” The triumphs and victories therein are endless, they never cease,—as the language of the seal implies, “conquering, they conquer.” But how many soever the partial fulfilments of these words, truth and truth alone adequately answers to them, for truth alone *continuously* conquers and shall

conquer. The overthrow of Paganism by Christianity in the age of Constantine, and of Popery at the Reformation, are but the results of the daily and hourly minor triumphs of truth. In other words, the Spirit of Truth triumphs momentarily over the Spirit of Error in the hearts of tens, then of hundreds, then of thousands, and so on, until at length the armies of Truth being recruited, the forces of Error give way before them: and a reformation follows. The Spirit of Truth, thus going forth conquering and to conquer, is the main object in the vista of the first seal. It is the cement which unites all the component parts, alike in the Region of Influence and of Events, into one great and compendious mystery of godliness. To return, then, to the main application. The seals contain both secular and ecclesiastical history: The former we have in the golden age of Rome; the latter, we find in "the Spirit of Truth" which had gone forth "conquering and to conquer," and which was to continue its triumphant march, despite Error's many successful attacks, down to the end of all things. This march commenced when the truth, preached in its primitive purity, first overcame the powers of darkness. The words of this seal have become a proverb: "Magna est veritas, et prevalebit"—"Truth is all powerful, and must prevail;" or, "conquering, will conquer." White, throughout prophecy, is the symbol of Truth, and is the colour peculiar throughout Holy Writ to Christ and his church, alike militant and triumphant. As militant it had the bow, as triumphant a crown was given. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—(ii. 10.) Of this triumphant march, the prophets frequently spoke. St John merely fills in the outlines they gave us, and thus completes the Word of God. "In thy majesty ride prosperously, because of Truth."—(Ps. xlv. 4.) For the full details of the outline given us in the seals, we must look to the subsequent chapters. The close of the vista of the first seal we find in xix., when "heaven opens, and behold a white horse; whose rider is called True." He is followed by the armies in heaven upon white horses, clothed in white linen, which is the righteousness of saints. "To execute judgment on the heathen, and punishments upon the people. This honour have all his saints."—(Ps. cxlix.) Then only will the war end and the vista close. The progressive triumphs of Truth can alone fulfil the weighty words of this seal. If, with our most popular writers, we see "conquering and to conquer" fulfilled in the triumphs of Rome's golden age, the expression is overstrained, and this is impossible with God. Nor did Trajan and his successors go on conquering and to conquer—their triumphs were broken and partial, not permanent. But the words of the seal express, with godlike brevity, accuracy, and amplitude, the whole vista seen by the seer. It is admitted by our best commentators, that the

2. And I saw, and behold a white horse : and he

Apocalypse gives us the continuous history of the world and church, from A.D. 96 to the restitution of all things ; but if their systems be correct, God gives this history in isolated and disjointed fragments. According to them, the first seal is Rome's golden age, another Caracalla's decree, and so on. In our view, each seal and vision is a serried vista of types or kindred events, all pointing to the consummation. Along it the prophet's eye runs, while in words he depicts whatever portion thereof, from its conspicuity or other cause, most strikes him. And that is again used to illustrate every kindred event. Thus the prophecy is repeated again and again in history, every page of which agrees with and illustrates the Word of God. The object of symbols is that they may suit every kindred event. Were one event alone referred to, symbols were unnecessary, and the language of the seals were plain narrative. Such, at least, we find in Scripture.—(Sketch, pp. 70, 71.) The mystery of godliness is not a fragment ; it fills immensity, as we read in Ps. cxxxix. 7–13. But its laws and language apply to empires, nations, states, cities, families, and hearts. The laws of nature apply to worlds and to atoms : in like manner do the laws of the seals apply equally to empires and to persons. Hence, as we have elsewhere said, the first seal does not teach us in words only that Truth “conquering shall conquer.” Those words are proved, illustrated, and re-enacted again and again in our own daily and hourly experience, and throughout the annals of the universe ; in the going forth of hosts to carnage, and in the still small voice that bloweth where it lists and triumphs where it wills.—(Sketch 18.) No day, no hour, no moment flies in which Truth is not conquering and making some inroad into the dominion of Error. There is here the same gradual increase of intensity which we find pervading prophecy (Intro. i. 4) ; and the final triumph of Truth, of which all intermediate triumphs are earnest pledges and shadows, will vastly exceed all its prototypes. This brief rehearsal of the triumphant march of Truth, we shall find more and more developed in every succeeding chapter and verse, until all its details are supplied. For it is the rule of prophecy, first to give an outline and then supply details.—(See Intro.) Thus we find the close of this seal in Rev. xix. 11–16—a passage clearly proving its continuance down to the end of time. But what need of proof that the mystery of godliness is continuous ?

2. *White horse.*—The horse is common to the first four seals, and indicates that we should interpret them similarly. In Zech. vi., we have a similar vision with red, black, white, and grised horses. The colours are similar, and the livid and grised horses,

that sat on him had a bow ; and a crown was given

are described by both prophets as "vigorous," or "strong," *χαλκρος*. Now the angel in Zechariah tells us, that "these are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth." We have then scriptural authority for stating that St John's four horses are "spirits" commissioned to execute the decrees of heaven.—(viii. 2.) "This first spirit seems to be a minister of good. That the others are evil spirits, we may infer from Zechariah and many parts of Holy Writ, where the horse and rider designates a power hostile to religion."—(*Hoare*.) We are told in Ps. lxxviii., that "God sent evil angels among them."*—(See Exod. xv. ; Jer. li. 21 ; Hag. ii. 22). "The spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him."—(1 Sam. xvi. 14 ; see App. A.) White is seventeen times mentioned in Revelation, and always in connection with godliness.

Bow.—Betokens a warrior, and was specially used by cavalry. Mr Elliott discovered that the bow was the badge of Crete. Nerva was a Cretan by birth, and his successors, in Rome's golden age, were so by adoption, which confers all the rights of birth. This small word, therefore, is an admirable illustration of the aptness, accuracy, and vastness of Scripture language. For while it suits the secular history of the seal, it equally suits the ecclesiastical. The bow and arrows of Christ, and of his church, are repeatedly alluded to in Scripture. Where He is said to ride prosperously because of truth, it is added, "Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies ; whereby the people fall under thee."—(Ps. xlv. 5.) David here prophesies of the last day, though with many intermediate references. Habakkuk, foretelling the same, says, "Thy bow was made quite naked."—(iii. 9.) And Zechariah adds, "Thy arrows shall go forth as lightning."—(ix. 14.) Of the literal Babylon, which typifies the mystical one, God says, "Let the archer bend his bow, spare not her young men ; destroy ye utterly all her host."—(Jer. li. 3.) And of the intermediate and final destruction of the wicked, David says, "When He bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, they shall be cut in pieces."—(Ps. lviii. 7.) Of the last judgment, God says, "I will spend mine arrows upon them." "I will make mine arrows drunk with blood."—(Deut. xxxii.) In other words, steep them in the vintage of the Apocalypse. It is also said, "I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy

* We not unfrequently find bad men prophesying. Balaam and the high-priest both did so. The Emperor Julian, in attempting to restore paganism, was suddenly cut short in his hellish career, and in his dying agony bore witness to the truth of the first seal by exclaiming, "O Galilean ! Thou hast conquered."

unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man."—(Zech. ix. 13.) Thus does our Lord marshal, arm, and send forth his followers to do battle with the mystery of iniquity—the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Crown.—στέφανος, or laurel wreath given to victors at the Olympic games. Augustus prohibited the use of the "stephanos" by generals in their triumphs, confining it to the reigning emperors. The diadem was first used by Diocletian. This crown or wreath primarily indicates the reigning emperors; the "authors," as Gibbon calls them, of the golden age, on the foreground of the vista. The further reference is to the crown promised by our Lord to every victorious member of his church. "I will give thee a crown of life."—(Rev. ii. 10.) The same word is used.—(See also Heb. ii. 7-9; 2 Tim. iv. 8; 1 Cor. ix. 25; 1 Pet. v. 4.) Every child of God is "a more than conqueror through Him that loved us." Every child of His is concerned in this triumphant march of Truth, and in each is the promise of the vision more or less accomplished; all forming sure earnest of the final accomplishment, and all tending towards it.

Rider.—One, in prophecy, as all admit, stands for a successive line of similar persons. The riders in the Region of Events, are the leaders of the armies of Truth; in the Region of Influence, the invisible leaders. Teacher, traced to its root, means a shooter of the arrows of Truth—such were these riders. The King himself does not go to battle. He is on his throne, but directs and orders all events, and is present in spirit in his executive, who act as they are "moved by him." Scripture intimates that legions of angels are employed in ministering between the Regions of Influence and of Events, but this organization of heaven we can only judge of from the visible, which is typical.—(Rom. i. 20.) Our Lord, through his type David, is called "Leader and Commander" of his people (Isa. lv. 4), and "The Captain of the Lord's host," or of the armies of Truth.—(Josh. v. 15).

Conquering and to conquer.—"When an emperor went forth to war, medals were struck depicting him galloping forth on horseback, with 'Profectio' or 'Expeditio Augusti.' Or a triumphant arch exhibited him riding among trophies and captives, preceded by Victory, bearing a crown."—(Euseb. i. 132.) But while we admit the obvious reference to Rome, the words of the prophecy, as we have stated, can be fulfilled by Truth alone. The participle and verb thus used, always, we believe, imply *continuity*; and the conquests of Truth alone are continuous and unbroken. The Spirit of Truth is ever conquering, and shall finally conquer. Si-

3. And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come.

milar expressions are frequent in Scripture—"Eating thou mayest eat," "dying thou shalt die," "living thou shalt live," "blessing I will bless," clearly implying continuity. So Hutcheson, with a different object, translates these expressions, adding, they "express a series successively." From Genesis to Revelation, a constant strife between Truth and Error is depicted, as shown in App. A. In the latter, the combat becomes more intense, Error "knowing that his time is short." But that the church may be consoled, the first seal assures us that the councils of hell shall not prevail, and that we "conquering, shall conquer." These words pierce the mist of years, and lead us in a breath from the rise of truth at Pentecost, to that day when the last enemy shall be destroyed, and all conquest stayed. They are "for yesterday, to-day, and for ever," and not for pagan Rome alone. We now see the value of symbols. One word contains a double history, and the language suits types, prototypes, and antitypes; while each prophecy is repeated once only in words, but again and again in the history alike of nations and of men. God thus adds warning upon warning, line upon line, precept upon precept, by which his people are prepared, and the wicked left without excuse. It is well known, that "coming events cast their shadows before." Holy Writ informs us, that all the events and rites of the Old Testament shadowed forth things to come. They were not the "very image" of those things.—(Heb. x. 1.) The passover lamb was not the very image of its antitype: it was a type or shadow of our Lord. So were Adam, Isaac, Joseph, David, Solomon, Samson, and others, and even the ladder and the rock. In like manner, the triumphs of Rome's golden age were shadows, not the very image, of those of Truth: so likewise all intermediate triumphs of Truth, great or small (words, be it remarked, wholly of man, for with God nothing is small), are but shadows, pledges or earnest, of the great final triumph. In a vast and godlike mechanism, all tending to a result preordained before the foundation of the world, where shall we find room for small events? They are as essential to the correct working of the entire machine as the greatest events. A watch will not go if one cog is twisted or out of place. God's mechanism fills immensity, and every cog is in its exact position. There is no such thing as chance, or accident. Each event, however minute, is intimately connected with all time and all eternity. What a work is here! Yet He fainteth not, neither is weary!

3. *The second beast* now summons forth a red horse. "These

4. And there went out another horse *that was red*; and *power* was given to him that sat thereon to take

are they whom the Lord has sent to walk to and fro through the earth."—(Zech. i., vi.) To the spirit thus evoked is "given power to take peace from the earth; that they should kill one another, and a great sword was given unto him." That is, he fills the earth with war, rebellion, bloodshed, and cruelty. We solicit a prayerful perusal of App. A.; it will show the reader that this spirit is "The Spirit of Error." He is the author of civil war and bloodshed in the secular world; while schism, controversy, and animosity in the church, issue in persecution and slaughter. We have shown (App. A.) that for every act of the Spirit of Truth, the Mystery of Error has a counter and antagonistic act. The first seal gave us Truth, trinity in unity; the next three seals gives us Error's counter trinity, the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet.

4. *Red horse*, or fiery coloured *πυρρος*.—On the foreground of this vista lies the Roman empire. Red is the universal symbol of war and bloodshed. This spirit takes away "*the peace*" of the first seal. For where truth is there is peace. This spirit "went forth"—(Compare "cast out," Apo. xii. 9.) There is no going forth mentioned in the third and fourth seals, because the dragon is the mainspring of the apostasy, and their spirits proceed from him. Looking, then, to secular history, we find that from A.D. 180, civil war, rebellion, bloodshed, and cruelty, caused by military despotism, are conspicuous throughout the Roman empire. It was a "reign of terror," succeeding a golden age. "Thirty-two emperors and twenty-seven pretenders alternately hurled each other from the throne by incessant civil warfare."—(Simondi.) He also terms it "ninety-two years of almost incessant civil warfare"—"the most calamitous period of upstarts, and of soldiers of fortune, who occupied the imperial power." The military created the emperors merely to slay them. During 100 years, sixty-five persons aspired to the throne; of these thirty-eight were murdered, chiefly by the soldiers, the rest fell in battle, and with them numberless partizans. The historian of the day describes the period from A.D. 180 to 192, as "the transition from a golden to an iron age." Gibbon begins his account thereof with the expression, "The power of the sword;" and adds, "The licentious fury of the Prætorian bands was the first symptom and cause of the decline of the empire."

Power to take peace from the earth.—Our best commentators admit that this should be translated "the peace," *την ειρηνην*, and that it is the peace of the first seal. This is clear: but to what

peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another; and there was given unto him a great sword.

peace does Scripture refer*—to the peace of God, which passeth all understanding; or to the peace of pagan Rome, which at best was imperfect and broken? The word occurs about 300 times in Scripture, and generally in either direct or typical connection with Truth and its progress. We read that "the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace." "The wisdom from above is peaceable."—(James iii. 17, 18.) "The righteous are kept in perfect peace" (Isa. xxvi. 3), while "the wicked are like a troubled sea, and cannot rest." God is five times termed in Scripture "the God of peace." Christ "is our peace." God is called 'the author of peace.'—(1 Cor. xiv. 33.) Most of the epistles open or close with "Grace be to you, and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." "To be spiritually-minded is peace."—(Rom. viii. 6.) To be carnally-minded is to lose that peace. Peace, then, is almost a synonyme for truth and godliness; for where they are, there is peace. We read that "God has called us to peace" (1 Cor. viii. 15); that is, has called us into the mystery of godliness, the first seal. The dragon, who hates and opposes all godliness, takes away this peace.—(See App. A.) Hence he is justly portrayed as taking the peace of God from the earth,—alike in kingdoms, nations, cities, families, and hearts. For as natural laws are of universal application, so are spiritual.

A great sword was given.—The giving of a sword, at the election by the emperor of the chief of the Prætorian guard, and of the imperial lieutenants in the provinces, was an ordinary ceremony at Rome. The term "large," perhaps refers primarily to the great power thus placed in the hands of the military. The legions carried their contests throughout the provinces, where civil war was as rife as at the capital. The adherents of all opposed to them were treated as traitors, and the inhabitants were considered the lawful prey of the military and of the "sword." But the main application of the word is to the great sword of the Adversary, whose continuous work and character is well illustrated by the Prætorian guards, to whom it may be said, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the works of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning."—(John viii. 44.) Throughout history we shall not find another period so

* While passing through the press, Hutcheson's Treatise on the Apocalypse came under our notice. Of the second seal he says, "It is the Kingdom of Satan." The third seal he makes "The Two-horned Beast." And the fourth, "The Papal Roman Empire."

admirably adapted to shadow forth and illustrate the Satanic rebellion, cruelty, and bloodshed which pervades the vista of the second seal. But, that with God, one event subserves a myriad ends, it would seem as if he had made the golden and iron ages of Rome with this sole object—the one radiant with light and triumph; the other, all darkness and death. No such parallels are to be found in history, following close the one on the other. This fragment of history, however, is only the “sigh” of the vista (Sketch 14), which serves on the immediate foreground to illustrate the main features of the vision, of which it is but a shadow or type. We must not, however, neglect the antitypes because the types are manifest, nor confound the shadows with the fulfilment of prophecy. If we do, we overlook God’s usual procedure of constantly forewarning man of the future, by the various events passing above, below, around, and within him. If, too, we see prophecy fulfilled in its shadows, how shall we be prepared for those awful events to which the shadows point? They are the signs of the times, which our Lord commanded us to study, and at our peril do we neglect to obey him. The impious threat of the great Adversary of God and man is, “I will be like the Most High,” and he is ever aiming at putting this threat into execution. Hence we find, that for every act of Truth, he has his counter or mimic act.—(App. A.) The main application of the seal is to the counter or mimic trinity of Error. In the first seal we had the Spirit of Truth. In the second seal we have the Spirit of Error, the details of which are given in Apo. xii., and more or less in every chapter. The first is “perfect and thoroughly furnished:” trinity in unity.—(John xvii. 21.) The second, ever mimicing truth, is also triune, though the imitation as usual is imperfect—“a falling away.” The reader will not understand us without a careful perusal of App. A.—(See also Chart.) The triune Spirit of Evil is composed of the red dragon in the second seal, the beast in the third seal, and the lamb-like beast, or false prophet, his executive, in the fourth seal; the three combining to form “the beast from the bottomless pit.” “The prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail.”—(Isa. ix. 15.) This spirit takes peace from the earth. “I came not to send peace, but a sword,” says our Lord, (Matt. x. 34), evidently referring to the strife between Truth and Error, which was greatly heightened by his coming, “Satan knowing that his time is short.”—(Apo. xii. 12.) Though triune in form, the Spirit of Error is one in its aim, agency, and character. All its energies blend together, and coalesce; while in its third person they all culminate and unite. Gibbon specially notes the tendency of Rome’s iron age to “obliterate the laws and liberty.” We find precisely the same tendency throughout the eras of the Spirit of Error, who, as we shall show, delights in despotism, and the extinction of the laws and

5. And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come. And I beheld, and lo a black horse: and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

liberty; and is, moreover, called by St Paul, "The lawless one." Owing to the vast scope of the first four seals, which give us an epitome not only of Revelation, but of all Holy Writ, our readers may have difficulty in at once grasping their teaching. But if they will prayerfully and diligently trace in Holy Writ, in the world, and in themselves, the great mystery of Error, trusting to prayer and the Word, and not in man, we think that they will find, that rightly to understand this counter "mystery of iniquity," which is ever impiously waging war against the Lord and His anointed, is to remove much of the difficulty which has hitherto hung around the Apocalypse and all Scripture. God alone can illuminate our dark minds, but to that end He may bless the humble means here used.

5. *Black horse.*—White is used in triumph, red in war, black universally in mourning. Nearly all commentators agree, that extortion and scarcity are indicated in this seal—they of course entail mourning and wo. This seal depicts the second person in the mimic trinity of Error, or the beast. The second horse was termed "*another*," as if quite distinct from the first horse. But there is no such distinction intimated in the other horses, because they are one in spirit. But we must commence with the first illustrative shadow in the vista, or its primary application. Rome is still the foreground. The era succeeding the iron age was one of fiscal oppression, originating in an edict of Caracalla's—a main cause, Gibbon informs us, of the decline of the empire, adding, the empire was "darkened by its deadly shade." The provinces were bound to supply the capital with corn, oil, and wine, at fixed rates; the contributions were severe, and abuse of authority by collectors almost universal. There was the show of justice without its power; and laws were enacted against extortion, which, however, remained rampant. Caracalla's decree made Rome coextensive with the empire. All thus received the *vain* title, but *real* obligations of Roman citizens. Taxation was thus doubled, the old and new imposts being both levied. "Instead of a twentieth, he exacted a tenth of all legacies and inheritances, and during his reign he crushed alike every part of the empire under the weight of his iron sceptre." "From this period to the extinction of the empire," "historians unanimously agree in representing the burden of the public impositions" "as the in-

tolerable and increasing grievance of their own times."—(*Gibbon*, xiii.) "Swarms of exactors sent into the provinces and cities filled them with agitation and terror, as though a conquering enemy were leading them into captivity." In A.D. 301, a great dearth prevailed in most provinces of the empire, and Diocletian blindly fixed the prices of provisions. This injury to traders and destruction of proprietary right, changed the dearth into a famine.—(*Uni. Hist.*, xv. p. 501.) In 362 there was a general famine. At Antioch, wheat sold for 400 pieces of silver per bushel. Julian again fixed prices, and augmented the evil. Constantine had difficulty in checking the exposure of new-born infants, "the effects of distress, caused chiefly by the intolerable burden of taxes; while an eighth of the empire became a desert."—(*Gibbon*.) Law and avarice go hand in hand in completing the destitution and woe. "Hurt or touch not the oil and wine," was at first a standing rule, though set aside by avarice. We have shown (*Sketch 14*), that prophecy selects the ever present events of history to shadow forth ulterior ones. This marked portion of Roman history is therefore only a shadow, but a most expressive and teaching one, of the main features of this seal. The main application then is to the beast, the second person in the trinity of Error. We shall have its details again and again given under the different heads of the dragon's bride, the mother of harlots or false churches, the synagogue of Satan, the church of error, the great city, &c. The secular history just given fully shadows it forth. Mark the many resemblances! In the era of the beast, we find the show of truth and justice without its power. Spiritual scarcity and distress prevail throughout its empire. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the words of the Lord."—(*Amos* viii. 11.) The beast veils the Bible by spurious imitations and counterfeits, by a foreign tongue, by withholding it, and by muttering instead of reading it. Truth he veils by overlaying it with the traditions and teachings of men, "pious fictions," "lying wonders," "joint saviours," "saints," images, effigies, idols, and pictures—thus, in the words of *Gibbon*, "darkening" all things "by its deadly shade." The beast loves darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil. Hence the black horse. Its aim is to promote ignorance, and veil knowledge. Private judgment, and the lights which God has given to guide man, are by its creed extinguished. It demands "absolute and unconditional surrender of the intellect." Lastly, as the secular powers fixed the prices of food, and said, "Touch not the oil and the wine," so the main development of the beast fixed the prices of spiritual food, by the sale of indulgences, and in other ways; while the oil and wine, the comforts and unction of the Holy Spirit, and the memorials of a

Saviour's dying love, have been withheld from the people, by "the sacerdotal forgery of a sacrificing priesthood." Dark, indeed, is the vista of the seer. A famine of the Word of God! The "sons of oil" (Apo. xi. 4), have no place here. Loud proclamations of equity are made, and the so-called heavenly food is sold to the highest bidder. But ignorance and spiritual destitution broods along the vista, darkening, withering, and destroying alike body and soul. We would not, however, wholly restrict the beast to Papal Rome, though as "Satan's masterpiece," and from its conspicuity, it is afterwards justly chosen to illustrate *all* error. There are many in Rome who are not of Rome: there are many of Rome, who are not in Rome. God classes not mankind in endless sects, but in two—Truth and Error. In whatever heart error reigns, there is Antichrist. In whatever heart truth reigns, there is Christ.—(See contrasted statement in Sketch 67.) This vast stream of the beast, then, includes Error's universal church and empire. In it two great heresies, his masterpieces, stand conspicuous, the Eastern and Western Antichrists. But in looking at them as the best and fittest illustrations of all Error (for on this account, as well as for their own intrinsic conspicuity and importance are they selected), let us do so chiefly thence to learn our own errors, and to pray for theirs. These heresies, the offspring of the mystery of iniquity, teach us the origin, aim, and doom of our own; and in the stream of this seal are Britain's formalism, Romanism, socinianism, antinomianism, socialism, mormonism, and every heresy great or small. In chap. ix., and all others, we have fuller and fuller details of this counter universal Church and State of Error.

A pair of balances in his hand.—This indicates a public display of equity, whereof a balance is the emblem. *Zugon* also signifies, and is usually translated, yoke. "The balances of deceit are in his hand, he loveth to oppress."—(Hos. xii. 7.) "They shall eat bread by weight, and with care; they shall drink water by measure."—(Ezek. iv. 16.) "Shall I count them pure with wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights."—(Micah vi. 11.) The whole indicates an outward and ostentatious display of Right and Truth, without the inward reality. We have since found that the early fathers deemed "*hypocrisy*" the prevailing characteristic of this seal. "The Adversary" is the arch-hypocrite; and of his children our Lord said, "Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." Of all this we shall have ample proof as we proceed. What a fearful word is hypocrite, yet how often is it applied to God's children! It is saying to God's sons, Ye are of the Devil! This the world said of our Lord. And shall his servants escape the imputation? No! but wo unto the imputers! "By your words ye shall be judged, and by your words ye shall be condemned." It was of

6. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

this crime our Lord spake, "Whosoever shall say, Thou fool (Belial—bearing witness that his brother worshipped false gods), shall be in danger of hell fire." We must not, however, overlook the fact, that balances here might more properly be rendered *yokes*. The yoke of Truth is often mentioned; Error has his counter yoke. It is as if this spirit, displaying the yoke of the apostasy, impiously yet invitingly said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of spirit."—(App. A.)

6. *A measure of wheat for a penny.*—A penny was a day's wages. The measure, or *chenix*, was 1 quart and the 1-12th of a quart. In the ordinary state of the market, eight such measures of grain were obtainable for a penny or denarius. Food then was at eight times its current value, and a day's wages barely provided for one mouth. Hence scarcity, famine, and leanness and blackness from exhaustion and poverty. Wheat is the chief among grains—the staff of life, and the type of that bread which came down from heaven. Its first fruits were offered to God (Exod. xxxiv. 22); and of it were the cakes and wafers of the passover made.—(xxix. 2.) We have, therefore, in the scarcity of the type, an indication that spiritual famine is referred to; while barley, an inferior grain, which often intoxicates—a close counterfeit, but yet not a true type of "the bread of life"—is three times as plentiful. God would "feed his people on the finest of wheat" (Ps. lxxxi. 16); but the mimic god feeds with counterfeits, which elate, bewilder, pierce, intoxicate; and even these he gives grudgingly and sparingly, and would, if he could, wholly withhold, for the sleep of death is his delight.—(See App. A.) There is an analogical and typical connection between all in the natural and spiritual worlds; and if we separate these, we destroy God's perfect mechanism.

Hurt not the oil and the wine.—In this command lies the salvation of the true church; and by it she has been preserved inviolate, however rampant and mighty her adversary. The dragon's bride, or harlot—in other words, Error's church—was to impose a famine of the Word of God, and a yoke of ceremonies; but she was not to hurt the oil and wine. "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther," was her command; and hence her iniquities were staid at the very threshold of Christ's temple and church. She might grievously torment and even kill the members of that

7. And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come.

8. And I looked, and behold a pale horse; and

church, but not one drop of wine or oil should she harm. What a precious promise is here! The councils of hell, deep and mysterious as they are, should not prevail against the church. St Paul gave us the same assurance: "For I am persuaded," he says, "that neither angels, nor principalities, nor powers, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Good angels could never attempt to separate us, and, consequently, the Adversary's angels are meant. Similar injunctions abound in Scripture, destroying angels being frequently commissioned not to touch Christ's church. Thus it was in Egypt.—(See also Ezek. ix. 4–6.) In Apo. vii., xi., ix. 4, and many other passages, neither the oil, nor the channels thereof, *i.e.*, the witnesses, who are termed "sons of oil," were to be hurt; that is, as regards their spirituality. Tribulation and bodily hurt they would have, but on this they multiply and grow.—(Exod. i. 12.) God's command was, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." We find oil and wine generally coupled together in Holy Writ: they are the well-known symbols of spirituality. In Exod. xxx. 29, oiling signified setting apart for the service of God. The best oil and best wine were among the chief offerings.—(Numb. xviii. 12.) It was this unction which ran down from Aaron's head to the skirts of his garments—typifying that unction from the Holy One which should flow throughout Christ's members.—(1 John ii. 20, 27.) John expressly adds, that this "anointing teaches us all things, and is Truth, and is no lie." The command, then, simply is, "Hurt not the truth." This Error never has done: the church's cruise of oil has never failed, nor her handful of meal. Error has, by his deep devices, gained all the members of his own body; but he never has secured one of Christ's, because "He who has anointed us is God."—(2 Cor. i. 21.) See Isa. xxv. 6; Zech. iv. 14; Mark xiv. 25; Joel iii. 18. And if further references are required, see Cruden on both words, and on "olive."

8. *Pale horse*.—Rome, pale and livid, as if approaching death, is still chosen to illustrate the vista. Death, with its badge Hades, rides roughshod over the empire. The primary reference in secular history is evidently to the "twenty years of shame and misfortune, from A.D. 248 to 268," during which, according to Gibbon, "every instant of time was marked, every province of the Roman empire was afflicted, by barbarous invaders and

military tyrants; and the ruined empire seemed to approach the last and fatal moment of its dissolution." Here we have the "sword." The historian adds: "Our habits of thinking so fondly connect the order of the universe with the fate of man, that this gloomy period of history has been decorated with inundations, earthquakes, meteors, preternatural darkness, and a crowd of prodigies, fictitious or exaggerated." "But a long and general famine was a calamity of a more serious kind. It was the inevitable consequence of rapine and oppression, which extirpated the produce of the present, and the hope of future harvests." Here we have "hunger." "Famine is almost always followed by epidemic diseases, the effect of scanty and unwholesome food. Other causes, however, must have contributed to that furious plague which, from A.D. 250 to 265, raged without intermission in every province, every city, and almost every family in the Roman empire." "We might suspect that war, pestilence, and famine had consumed in a few years the moiety of the human race."—(*Gibbon*, chap. x.) Five thousand died daily at Rome. Here we have the third agent, "Death." *Gibbon*, however, in this period makes no mention of the fourth, "wild beasts." But the vista runs, we believe, primarily to the end of the empire; ulteriorly, and in its main application, to the end of time, when the False Prophet with his compeers, the Dragon and the Beast, are defeated, made captive, and cast into the pit: seizing in its course such kindred events as best illustrate the main application of the vision. Proceeding, then, in history, we find that, after a momentary resuscitation of the empire, which was used to persecute Christians with unusual ferocity, Rome was again soon overrun by barbarians; and that event termed "the migration of nations," destroyed Rome Proper. "The disastrous period of the Roman empire," says *Gibbon*, "may justly be dated from the reign of Valens," A.D. 378. "Were a man called upon to fix a period of history during which the human race was most calamitous and afflicted, he would without hesitation name that which elapsed from the death of Theodosius to the establishment of the Lombards in Italy."—(*Robertson*.) The epitome is as follows:—The Goths revolt, plunder Greece; Alaric invades Italy; Rome thrice besieged, and at length plundered; Attila invades Gaul and Italy; Gaul and Spain occupied by the Goths; Rome sacked by Genseric, and the empire extinguished. The horse had passed away: after this seal we find it no more. *Gibbon* adds: "The irruption of these nations was followed by the most dreadful calamities, as the barbarians ravaged with equal fury the cities and the open country. The progress of famine reduced the miserable inhabitants to feed on the flesh of their fellow-creatures; and even the *wild beasts*, who multiplied without control, were exasperated to attack and devour their human prey. Pestilence soon

his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him : and power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword,

appeared, and a large proportion of the people was swept away."—(chap. xxxi.) Jerome says : "Nothing was left save sky and earth ; and, after the extirpation of the human race, the land became overgrown with thickets and brambles." "Attila was dreaded," says Gibbon, "not only as a warrior, but as a magician." The usual epithet applied to the barbarian leaders was, "The destroyer of nations," or, as the text has it, "Death." Gibbon says : "To the terrors of their inroads were added the surprise and abhorrence which were excited by the shrill voice, the uncouth gestures, and the strange deformity of these savages of Scythia ;" or, as the text expresses it, "Hell followed" the leader Death. Now, we could not in the whole range of history find a period better calculated to illustrate the main feature of this seal, viz., the third person in the counter trinity of Error. In the type we have swarms of Satan's emissaries wielding God's four sore judgments throughout the empire ; in the antitype we have similar swarms enacting precisely a similar part, save that, with the usual intensifying of prophecy, the latter kill both soul and body. The *main application*, then, is to the third person in the Spirit of Error—the lamb-like beast, or false prophet.—(Apo. xiii. and xvi.) He is the tail of the triune beast. "The prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail."—(Isa. ix. 15.) Prophecy is ever amplifying and increasing in intensity. Thus, we find concentrated in this third person all the characteristics of the two first persons. "He exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, who, again, has his power from the dragon."—(Apo. xiii. 2, 12.) He has the sword of the dragon, the spiritual destitution, hypocrisy, and disease of the beast, added to his own powers. He is, in fact, fully empowered by the two first persons in the trinity of Error. Hence his almost universal sway, wielding the four sore judgments of God (Ezek. xiv. 21)—"sword, famine, death, and wild beasts." The dismal and destructive march of this lamblike Beast, in whose train follow Death and Hell, is admirably depicted by the secular history just given ; and from the disastrous close of the type, we learn what will yet be the close of the antitype. This third person, like all the others, will be described again and again in the sequel, under the different heads of the Eastern and Western False Prophets ; and there we must look for details.

Wild beasts, besides their literal meaning, are the well-known symbols of despotic and persecuting powers, lay and ecclesiasti-

and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

cal. The Latin hierarchy ever used the secular powers to persecute and destroy all who would not worship the Beast. "He caused them to be killed."—(Apo. xiii. 15.) In that and the subsequent chapters we shall have in full what is here only stated in brief. Both the Eastern and Western False Prophets used the secular arm to persecute and destroy. It might be rendered, "By means of the evil beasts of the earth."

Power was given unto them.—The words "unto them," have never, we believe, been explained. They seem wholly inapplicable to the rider in this seal, and in the other seals the singular is used. That they have remained in our version shows the wonderful preservation which God has exercised over even that small word "them;" for, on reading the verse, man instantly says it should be "him," as in the other seals. And thus "or him" has crept into our marginal reading and no further. It is admitted that the best versions read *αυτοις*, despite the strong temptation which every transcriber must have been under to insert the singular, because the plural *seems* unintelligible, and commentators who allude to the expression at all adopt the singular. Now, had the mystery of Error prevailed to obliterate this word "them" and to insert "him," the change would have greatly served to veil his mystery, and this is his unceasing aim—(App. A.) That this very important word, then, should have remained unhurt, despite man's ignorance and the Adversary's wiles, seems to us a fulfilment of God's command in the previous seal, "Hurt not the truth." Now, in Holy Writ, the plural is applied to the blessed Holy Spirit—the executive of the Godhead. And we have shown (App. A.) that Error is ever imitating Truth, hence his third person, or counter executive, is also spoken of in the plural. "Their name is legion, for they are many." It is the office of the Holy Spirit to seal God's children, as will be apparent in the next chapter. Now, the language there used is, "Till we have sealed the servants of our God."—(vii. 3.) In App. A. we have shown that for every act in the mystery of godliness, the hideous antagonistic mystery of iniquity has a counter act. We learn the same lesson here. As in the blessed and holy Trinity the third person is of the first and second persons, so in the mock and unholy trinity the third person is of the first and second. For in chap. xiii. 2, 12, we learn that the first person empowers the second, and the second the third; the three act together and coalesce; and the characteristics of the two first persons meet and blend in the third, in, by, and through whom they act. And, as in the for-

mer, God works through the third Person, so does the unholy trinity work through his third person, his executive. Error, too has visible and invisible agents—the children of disobedience and his legions of evil angels: just as Truth has its legions of angels and sons of obedience.—(App. A.) It is the Holy Spirit that causes the latter to worship God, and his angels have charge over them. So it is the unholy third person who we find causing men to worship the Beast (Apo. xiii. 12), while evil angels have the charge of such false worshippers.—(App. A.) We find “the Seven spirits of God (see Apo. i. 4) sent forth into all the earth.”—(Apo. v. 6.) So does Error send forth his mock seven spirits, as we shall find in the sequel. The seven Spirits of God stand “*before*” his throne (Apo. i. 4), and this implies, as is well-known, one’s executive. The executive of the unholy trinity hold the same place, for they officiate “*before*” the Beast.—(xiii. 12.) We see, then, how complete and how blasphemous the imitation, and all this the better to deceive men, by confounding truth and error. How essential is it to man to understand this mystery of Error! God tells us not to be ignorant of Satan’s devices; but for this command we should (“for even when we do good, evil is present with us,” to withstand and prevent us) recoil before the appalling horrors of the Adversary’s mystery of iniquity. But we cannot too narrowly watch the Enemy’s proceedings in these days, when he is evidently about to do his worst. The armies of Truth will thereby be strengthened and placed more on their guard, and the forces of Error proportionately weakened. The devil, as our Lord told us, is about to “try to deceive the very elect;” and looking to his past acts, well may even the elect tremble for the future. But the more thoroughly the devices of Satan are understood, the fewer his chances of success.—(See App. A.) To show our readers that we are not warping Scripture to suit our solution, we here quote Mr Wordsworth’s remarks on the Lamb-like Beast or False Prophet of chapter xiii:—“The former beast is the depository of power, and the latter labours for the aggrandisement of that power. Hence it is that the words ‘it was given’ (xiii. 2, 4, 5, 5, 7, 7), are repeatedly applied to the former beast, while the expression, ‘*he works*’ (xiii. 12, 12, 13, 13, 14, 14, 15, 16, 17), characterises the latter. The second beast works for the former beast to whom the power is given;” or, in our words, is his executive. “St Iren. v. 28, commenting on this passage, well describes the second beast as the *υπαρτιστης*, or armour-bearer of the first beast.”—(Wordsworth, 277.) See Sketch, note to p. 26.

Death and Hell followed.—What else could we look for in the wake of false teachers? Error’s executive, death and hell, necessarily follow them. “The dead are there, and her guests are in the depths of hell.”—(Prov. ix. 18.) A harlot is the usual type of false churches, therefore it is added, “Let not thine heart

decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths: For she hath cast down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.”—(Prov. vii. 25–27.) The death both of body and soul are here referred to, and therefore this word carries us down to the end of time, when the second death takes place, (see Notes Apo. ii. 23, on “kill with death”), and when the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire. The removal of the warhorse in this seal is, we believe, a difficulty hitherto unexplained. We have already given the reason thereof in the primary or illustrative application; but it remains to give the same in the main application. The four first seals give us a concise but ample outline of the last mighty strife between Truth and Error, an outline which is again and again filled in by each succeeding chapter, “here a little and there a little.” The battlefield and the opposing hosts having been depicted, the warhorse is no longer necessary, and is withdrawn.

The fourth part.—Elliott and Hoare give the following reading: “Power was given unto them to kill over one part of the earth with the sword, on another part of the earth with famine, on another part with pestilence, and on the fourth with wild beasts of the field.” The latter writer adds, “There is abundant authority for it in Scripture.” “Such as are for death to death, such as are for the sword to the sword, such as are for famine to the famine, and such as are for the captivity to the captivity.”—(Jer. xv. 2; Ezek. xiv. 21, xxxiii. 27.) We leave our readers to form their own judgment on that solution; and would merely remark, that the seal before us refers mainly to Error’s chief theatre or head-quarters, called, both by Daniel and St John, “the fourth.” It is with this division of the globe that the Apocalypse is mainly occupied, both from its own intrinsic importance, and as best illustrating all kindred subjects. Not only do the older prophets refer to this portion as the fourth empire, but Europe is in common parlance the fourth part of the earth, or fourth continent. Daniel brought us down to the history of the world’s “fourth” empire; St John resumes and consummates that history. We would not, however, limit the teaching of the Apocalypse to the fourth part of the globe. As the seven existing churches illustrate the universal church, so does the fourth empire of prophecy illustrate the universe. Europe is the plateia or grand square of the universe, elsewhere called the great city. The contrast to it—for the Apocalypse is full of contrasts—is “the city that lieth four square.” Here we have the fourth beast, the fourth part, the fourth seal, the four judgments. Like seven, the number signifies completion or fulness. The seals, trumpets, and vials, are all similarly divided into four and three, as are the epistles.

GENERAL REMARKS ON THESE FOUR SEALS.—In them we have a concise outline of the entire Apocalypse. Every subsequent chapter is occupied in filling in this outline with the fullest details. This is no new theory, but rather the law of prophecy; and though entirely overlooked by many writers, it did not escape the keen glance of Sir Isaac Newton and Lord Bacon. The eloquent and able author of the "Seventh Vial" says, "It is the manner of the Apocalypse, as it is that of ordinary histories, to glance at the grand close, and to give a succinct view of what is afterwards to be described in detail." "It constitutes," says the Rev. W. H. Hoare, "one of the most striking features of many of the prophecies of Scripture; it is calculated to create a new interest as the prophecy advances, by at once conveying to the mind a general impression of what is coming, and afterwards gratifying it with fresh and fuller information. Thus the scene is heightened, and the interest grows at every step; and what might seem superfluous repetition, tends only to enrich the picture and to perfect the execution of the work."

2. For the full development, then, of the outline contained in the first four seals, the reader must look to the sequel. There he will learn the whole tactics of the dragon, beast, and false prophet, in their deadly strife with truth, and will see in what a godlike manner they were briefly portrayed in the four opening seals. In chap. ix. the triune Spirit of Error is further developed in his Papal, Saracenic, and Turkish phase; and in chap. xvi. he reappears under the form of three unclean spirits from the mouth of the dragon, beast, and false prophet. But, indeed, this development is carried on throughout the Apocalypse and history, line upon line, precept upon precept. In the vials we shall find that Europe is returning to these days of Rome, only to be greatly intensified. The only institution which has survived sixty years' revolution in France is the sword; the only authority the people now know is the sword; and the "divine right of the sword" has become a proverb. From the second seal we learn that the invisible wielder thereof is the dragon.

3. Objectors, and their name is legion, will be ready to state that the second and third persons in the trinity of Error did not exist until A.D. 533. Jude, however, tells us that there were "false prophets" in his day, whom he terms "wandering stars." He also refers to the triune Spirit of Error, of Cain, Core, and Balaam—Cain, the persecutor; Core, the apostate; Balaam, the "false prophet." And so far from Antichrist having no existence before 533, St John tells us "even now there are many antichrists."—(1 John ii. 18.) And St Paul says, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work."—(2 Thess. ii. 7.) The mysteries of Truth and Error, Scripture tell us, have existed from the beginning.

9. And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held :

10. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not

9. *Fifth seal.*—We are now to learn some of the grand issues of the warfare portrayed in the first four seals. The entire martyrs of Pagan Rome are first depicted. They are the first instalment of that “noble army of martyrs,” the soldiers of Truth, who fell by the “great sword of the Adversary.”—(Matt. x. 34.) The seal discloses a long vista of Pagan, Papal, and Infidel martyrdoms ; in which “the era of martyrs” stands prominently forth on the foreground, and serves to shadow forth all future ones. The *secular* history, or illustrative portion of the fourth seal, took us down to the extinction of Pagan Rome. Here we have her entire body of martyrs complete only on that extinction, and forming the foreground of the vista. The Pagan persecutions are generally numbered at ten. Nero and Domitian commenced them ; even in Rome’s golden age peace and persecution alternated. The second Antonine revived persecution with great severity, but Diocletian perfected it. He determined to extirpate Christianity. Churches were destroyed ; Bibles burnt ; Christians slain, imprisoned, tortured, outlawed ; forbid to buy, sell, or traffic ; and their goods confiscated. 17,000 were slain in one month ; and in Egypt alone 144,000. At length Diocletian erected commemorative pillars, inscribed with “The Christian superstition is rooted out.” Coins were struck, with Jupiter darting thunderbolts at a figure representing the Christian Deity prostrated at his feet. Here we have the exact counterpart of the conduct of Papal Rome in its persecutions of the witnesses.—(xi.) Such is clearly the foreground of the vista ; and the secular history of Rome is again chosen to shadow forth the further ecclesiastical history of Papal and Infidel persecutions, down to the time when the heads of the last church shall be slain, and their bodies lie unburied in the streets, until God breathes life into them, and they ascend to heaven.

10. *How long, O Lord.*—This cry is a retrospective one, indicating long-suffering ; the authors of which are “the dwellers on the earth.” It is when they are all slain that St John sees them. The seal, however, while it dwells mainly upon the most prominent feature in the vista, embraces a period extending from

judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth ?

the first martyr down to the last slain by Pagan Rome, for all in the Apocalypse is progressive and gradual. And this suffering body further typify and shadow forth that of Papal Rome. The text indicates that the Pagan martyrs were complete, but that they must await the Papal martyrs, when their number would be accomplished. The words, "killed as they were," and the similarity of their robes, are further proofs of the identity of these two great bodies of martyrs. The seer being still in the temple, sees their souls, as newly slain sacrifices, below the altar, according to the usage of the earthly tabernacle and temple. The words, "until their fellow-servants and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled," at once carry us along the vista down to the end of time, when persecution and destruction shall no longer waste at noonday,—and this can only be when error is rooted out of the earth. Fifty millions of Papal martyrs (ix. 21) have been added to those of Pagan Rome, and the assembly will yet probably be swelled when the restored Jewish church undergoes its last fiery trial in the mountains of Israel. The compendious outline given in this seal is again and again filled in by the history of the witnesses, the woman in the wilderness, and other parts. To these we must refer the reader for further details.

Cried.—"The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground."—(Gen. iv. 10.) Here we see the beginning of that strife between Truth and Error, which runs from the first of Genesis to the close of Revelation, greatly increasing in intensity as it approaches the consummation. To the last and most deadly struggle the Apocalypse is mainly devoted. We find in prophecy a sustained connection between the Region of Influence and the Region of Events. The cry of the martyrs in the former for judgment, had, as Mr Elliott has indicated, its corresponding cry in the latter. When Theodosius, the first of the emperors baptized in the true faith of the Trinity, abolished the worship of idols in the Roman world, the church, expecting the millennium, cried out, "How long, O Lord ! wilt thou not judge and avenge our blood." This constant connection between the two regions pervades Scripture, history, and nature. We do not always see it ; but were our eyes opened, like Elisha's servant, we should. —(2 Kings vi. 17.)

Judge.—Clearly the judgment of Daniel vii. : "When the judgment was set and the books opened ; and when the saints should possess the kingdom." It is for this kingdom that the church longs and prays, "Thy kingdom come."

11. And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be fulfilled.

12. And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

13. And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind:

14. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

11. *White robes*, we are told (xix. 8), are the "righteousness of saints."—(See iii. 4.) The Jewish priest, on admission to office, was clothed in white robes, before he could enter the courts of the priesthood. How obviously throughout God's dealings with man is every event made to convey the most important lessons, and to shadow forth great things yet to come—the visible to depict the invisible.—(Rom. i. 20.) Every tender blade of grass that bursts the crust of mother earth speaks to man of his resurrection; and not a moment flies that is not laden with testimony to the truth, "He stands at the door and knocks." And yet numbers neither hear nor heed. Therefore they open not, and the King of Glory cannot enter.—(iii. 20).

12–14. *Sixth seal*.—In prophetic language the heavenly bodies symbolise heads or rulers. Sun is the monarch. Moon, the mother, or second power in the empire, *i.e.*, religion. Stars, inferior rulers, lay and ecclesiastical. Earthquake, revolution. Heaven, the civil and ecclesiastical firmament. Mountains and islands, great and small kingdoms.—(See App. B.) Translated from symbolic into literal language, the vision reads thus: "I beheld, and lo! there was a great revolution; the monarch was extinguished in night; religion was bathed in blood. The lesser rulers, lay and ecclesiastical, were overthrown as by a mighty tempest. The civil and ecclesiastical firmament was rolled away as a scroll; and kingdoms and states were moved out of their

places." We have the authority of Holy Writ for thus interpreting the symbols, and all will admit their correctness. Our version is not, therefore, arbitrarily drawn up, with a view to any predetermined scheme of interpretation. What, then, does this vision depict? Clearly a great revolution *both* in church and state. Turning then to history, we find Constantine miraculously raised up to wage war on Paganism, and to do battle for Christianity. He adopts the then much stigmatised Cross as his standard; and it is seen "glittering on the helmets, engraved on the shields, and interwoven into the banners of his soldiers."—(*Gib.* iii. 257.) He stated on his deathbed that he was warned in a vision to adopt this standard, and assured of success under it; and it is difficult otherwise to account for his adopting throughout his armies, and wearing on his person, this "abomination of the heathen Romans." And under it he did conquer. Army upon army fell before him, until even the vanquished acknowledged that the cross and victory were inseparable. "Licinius felt and dreaded the power of the consecrated banner; the sight of which, in the distress of battle, animated the soldiers of Constantine with invincible enthusiasm, and scattered terror and dismay through the ranks of the adverse legions."—(*Gib.* iii. 258.) "The ruin of the Pagan religion is described by the sophists as a dreadful and amazing prodigy, which covered the earth with darkness, and restored the ancient dominion of chaos and of night."—(*Ibid.*) Maximin made a vow, if successful, to extirpate Christianity; and represented himself on medals, as did Diocletian, destroying the hydra-headed monster, Christianity. This fiend "died slowly, consumed by an internal fire."—(*Milner.*) It was, in every sense of the word, a religious war, and was felt to be so by all. Thus was "the moon," or religion, bathed in blood. For such another war many now look, and the signs of its approach are neither few nor insignificant. The cross triumphed, as it ever must: "conquering, it will conquer." Paganism fell, and Christianity was enthroned on its ruins. It may be here objected that the extinction of the monarch is mentioned first in prophecy, though it stands second in point of time in history. But the reader will find (*Sketch 17*), that this is not unusual in prophecy, which generally mentions the chief item of the vista first.—(*Sketch 16.*) But the language of this seal is far too vast and sublime to be limited to this change in the religion of the empire; and able and numerous as have been the commentators who maintain that it is fulfilled in this nominal change, they never have and never can persuade thinking men that the seer's vista ends here. In our *Sketch* and fourth seal we have explained that the seer's eye and words run along the vistas of types and antitypes, and dwell now on one, now on another object therein, according to their prominence and the

necessities of the vision. Let us proceed, then, with the seer, and the first onward glance in history tells us that the monarch of the world's first empire now becomes black as sackcloth of hair, the civil firmament is rolled away, and every ruler is displaced by the mighty tempest of barbarians, while all its many states and provinces are moved from their places, to be redivided among the barbarian hordes. Government was annihilated, and every political distinction altered. It were an insult to the reader to detail Rome's fall. We select one account for its beauty and brevity:—

“ Oft on the trembling nations from afar,
Has Scythia breathed her living cloud of war;
And where the deluge burst with sweeping sway,
Their arms, their kings, their gods, were roll'd away ! ”

For the literal earthquake which heralded these political ones, see App. B. No greater religious and secular dissolutions have ever taken place. Yet greater are in store. Let us judge of the antitype by the type, and be prepared: In history, God bears witness to what we must yet expect when the apostasy is dissolved, and every kingdom and state in the empire of Error are moved out of their places, to make way for that kingdom which shall never be destroyed. Foreshadows of this putting down of all rule and all authority we had in 1848, and previously. Others are looming into view. Of this vision Daniel, following the same order, also speaks. His “apostasy is first slain, and his body given to the burning flame; while the rest of the beasts had their dominion taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.”—(vii. 12.) Both the church and state of Error are smitten by the stone cut out without hands, and become as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor, while the stone becomes a great kingdom and fills the whole earth.—(ii. 35.) We shall find in the sequel that church and state are ever commingled throughout the Apocalypse and history. They go hand in hand; they sin together and are punished together. Their being blended in this seal, is, therefore, perfectly consistent with all that we find in prophecy.—(See Notes viii. 12.) Indeed, the church and world are so intermingled as to be in one sense inseparable. Wordsworth says of the Apocalypse, “History generally and not church history only; because, as our Lord says, ‘the field is the world:’ that is, the church is universal in time and place; whatever concerns the world concerns the church; whatever concerns the church concerns all men.”—(See Sketch, Note, p. 26.) It may be objected, that the death of the empire has already been hinted at in fourth seal, and that repetition here is needless. But we find prophecy replete with such preintimations of what is afterwards to be again and again more fully detailed. Such, from first to last, is the structure of the Apocalypse. It

15. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains ;

16. And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb :

17. For the great day of his wrath is come ; and who shall be able to stand ?

indicates all from the very beginning, and ever and anon returns thereto to exhibit the condensed matter at each repetition in some new phase, and with much additional detail.

15-17.—These three verses clearly do not refer to Pagan Rome. Their language is perfectly literal, not a symbol exists in it ; while that of three previous verses is highly symbolic. Hence we infer that the seer has reached the end of the vista ; he no longer dwells on intermediate events which require symbolic language. His prophecy now is a final one, and is therefore given in plain narrative.—(Sketch, pp. 70, 71.) He has reached “the great and terrible day of the Lord ;” he dwells thereon and details its terrors, without the use of a symbol, and with minuteness and accuracy. And, as if to leave no possibility of our mistaking the day referred to, the narrative closes with “for the great day of His wrath is come ; and who shall be able to stand ?” These verses wholly preclude our limiting this seal to the overthrow of Paganism. Holy Writ is full of references to this day of the Lamb’s wrath. Joel speaks of it almost in St John’s words, “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.”—(ii. 31.) Isaiah speaking of it says, “All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll : and all their host shall fall down as the leaf falleth from the vine, and as the falling fig from the fig-tree.”—(xxxiv.) Here the seer selecting Idumea for the type, pictures forth by it almost in the words of St John, “the last great earthquake.” Idumea, Edom, or Dumah, are frequently used by the prophets as types of the unbelieving nations among the Gentiles. Hosea has, “and they shall say to the mountains cover us, and to the hills fall on us.”—(x. 8.) In Appendix H. the reader will find most of the passages of Scripture referring to

this day. The judgments of the Lord are numerous. The day of the Lord stands alone. All judgments herald this day of wrath.

GENERAL REMARKS.—Our most popular writers limit these seals to one application. For instance :—

| | | | |
|--------------|---|------|------------------|
| The 1st Seal | is Rome's golden age. | From | A. D. 96 to 185. |
| The 2d Seal | Rome under military despotism, | | 185 to 220. |
| The 3d Seal | Rome under fiscal oppression, scarcity, &c., | | 220 to 248. |
| The 4th Seal | Rome's era of mortality, . . | | 248 to 268. |
| The 5th Seal | Rome's "era of martyrs," . . | | 303 to 311. |
| The 6th Seal | Dissolution of Pagan firmament, | | 322 to 395. |

And if we alter the dates here and there, we have most of the systems of solution hitherto attempted.

We admit a primary reference in the seals to such periods, but only as so many different keys to the portals of futurity; the present being, according to the rule of prophecy, used to depict the future.

2. We lose sight of the obvious meaning of the word "seven," (i. 4)—and every word of God is radiant with meaning—if we understand it of anything short of the full history of the Apocalypse. The seven seals give us the *whole* outline thereof; the seven trumpets give the same in fuller detail; the seven vials in the fullest detail. Hence we find in the text that when the seven seals are opened, *all* is open.

3. If the reader will compare the fulness of the sixth seal with the meagerness of the solutions, which see its fulfilment in Rome's change from Paganism to nominal Christianity, he will perceive the error of the limitation system. Constantine at first tolerated heathenism, placing all sects upon a par, and eventually merely legalised Christianity. He did not extinguish Paganism; it lingered on unchanged in nature, though unsanctioned by law, and finally darkened Christianity with its fetid fumes. Constantine was Pontifex Maximus throughout his reign, as were some of his successors; the palace was still *diva domus*; the emperor's decrees, *oraculum cæleste*; his edicts, *constitutiones divinæ*; his missives, *literæ sacræ*; his images were worshipped, public sacrifices were permitted, and he himself was at death deified by the senate. The emperor Arcadius, in 404, decreed "all shall be deprived of their rank who sacrilegiously dare to question our divinity." Nor did Paganism hold that position in the state which the sun does in the earth; it was a creature of the state, not the head thereof. If the sun refer to the head of the Pagan church, i.e., the Pontifex Maximus, then Constantine and his successors to Gratian must be referred to, for they held this office. Did Constantine become black as sackcloth of hair? Again, what

possible analogy is there between the sun and Paganism? From its birth it was black as night; it had no light and could lose no light. Neither was it quenched; it lived on, alas! to blacken Christianity. The rolling away of the heavens, denotes the destruction of that empire of which the sun was the chief. This did not take place at the triumph of Christianity over Paganism, nor were kingdoms and states thereby moved out of their places. Finally, no solution of ver. 15-17 can be found in the overthrow of Paganism. And the seer distinctly tells us that they depict the day of the Lamb's wrath. "Let then God be true, and every man a liar!" The era of Constantine was evidently but a partial and typical fulfilment of this seal, which includes a secular, as well as an ecclesiastical convulsion. The prophecy was then *partially* re-enacted in history, in order to shadow forth, not in words only, but in deeds, the further and final fulfilments.

4. The Apocalypse is mainly occupied with Daniel's fourth empire—Pagan Rome and Papal Christendom, that being the chief theatre of Satan's antagonism, the main battlefield between Truth and Error. But we must not suppose that the agencies at work, or the lessons conveyed, are limited thereto. Prophecy selects the most conspicuous feature of each vista, both on account of its own intrinsic importance, and because it forms the best illustration or shadow of all homogeneous events. Thus the strife between Truth and Error is as observable in Asia, America, and Africa, as in Europe, and God's teaching is not limited to one continent. When the Eastern and Western Antichrists in Europe sprung into being, Hinduism and Buddhism in Asia simultaneously received a new life. Papal Christendom is the fittest illustration of the whole empire of Error, hence it stands forth prominently in prophecy; and Revelation refers primarily to Europe, ultimately to Europe and the universal kingdom of Error; for the mysteries of godliness and of iniquity are universal.

5. Man not only loses himself in the labyrinth of second causes, but bewilders himself with various empires, numberless churches, and endless sects, under which he vainly tries to rank and classify mankind. In the prophecy before us only two empires are named, the empire of Truth and the empire of Error—only two churches, that of Truth and that of Error—while all the inhabitants of the earth are divided into two sects, the sons of Truth and the sons of Error. Truly Scripture

"Stands like the cerulean arch we see,
Majestic in its own simplicity."

6. Let such as care to do so observe (Sketch 19), that we did not arrive at the solution now offered, and then mould Scripture to our scheme. A prolonged search through all the minutiae of the Apocalypse, and of symbols, and of the tactics of Error, led

finally to it ; and that the seals contained the two great mysteries of Scripture, pitted together in battle array, was the last truth at which we arrived. Since we reached this consummation, we have found nothing in Scripture to jarr with our solution, and every thing in it and the Apocalypse to bear witness to it. It has since greatly opened all Scripture to us, and explained many things which had for long years seemed inexplicable. Never did an age call so much for discernment between Good and Evil as ours. Numbers are arising who call evil good and good evil. The Spirit of Error has come down in great wrath, knowing that his time is short, and is striving, "if possible, to deceive the very elect." And we know of no better mode of "exercising ourselves to discern between good and evil," than prayerfully and faithfully to read the Book of God, the book of history, and the book of nature, in the light of the seals, and say this is the work of Truth, that of Error. Or, to study daily life by the same test ; or, better still, to look into our own hearts, and put all our thoughts, words, feelings, and emotions to the same test. Thus will the laws of Scripture, like those of nature, prove ever applicable. The first seal, we repeat, does not teach us in words only that truth conquering shall conquer. These words are proved, illustrated, and re-enacted again and again in our own daily and hourly experience, and throughout the annals of the universe, in the going forth of hosts to carnage, and in the still small voice that bloweth where it lists, and triumphs where it wills. The great sword of the dragon, who has the power of death, is momentarily piercing us. We feel it in his every plague, we feel it in his every war, we feel it in our hearts, we behold it in our homes, on the blood-sodden fields of Waterloo and Goojerat, and in the cradle sick-bed, whence the infant spirit flies to God who gave it. And if men argue that this makes prophecy misty and vague, we reply, that we learn from Holy Writ that truth usually appears so to us, because we are blinded to truth, and do not readily receive or compass it. Two such stupendous mysteries are necessarily dim and misty to our limited vision. But if we "have our senses exercised by reason of use to discern between good and evil," these mists will disappear.

7. If the reader will turn to Faber's symbols, or, indeed, to any judicious commentary, he will find that we have not warped the symbolic language to suit our solution. Barnes, for instance, goes minutely into the symbols of the seals. His work issued from the press about the same time as our own ; any correspondence, therefore, must be unintentional, and he, moreover, refers the seals to Pagan Rome. As to the meaning of the symbols, however, we are precisely agreed. The First Seal, he says, is symbolical of "triumph, prosperity, and happiness."

The Second, of "sanguinary war. The sword, emblem of war,

but not of certain victory"—"carnage, discord, bloodshed."
 "There is no possibility of mistaking this, that a time of *slaughter* is denoted by this emblem."

The Third.—"Scarcity, as if there were oppression."

The Fourth.—"The colour here denotes the reign of death."

A journal, whose editor is pledged by his writings to existing schemes, informs its readers that our attempt is futile—dissuades from the prosecution of our work—and adds, "The author does not seem to be aware that he has been anticipated by Hengstenberg." As another critic has fallen into a similar mistake, here is the truth :—

HENGSTENBERG'S SOLUTION.

FIRST SEAL.

"The rider here is no other than Christ."—(P. 251.)

"The crown is not the victor's crown, but the badge of royal dignity."—(252.)

"The book with the seven seals is the book of the judgments which God suspends over an ungodly world."—(253.)

"In this respect there is no difference between the first seal and the others, according to the right exposition. The appearances are all joyful for the church, all terrible for the world."—(250.)

SECOND SEAL.

"The object of the passage before us is a threatening of bloody discord ; it is one of the chief punishments which alight on an ungodly world ; one of the chief means of Christ's victory. It breaks the might, the confidence, the security, the arrogance and fury, of the Antichristian world ; it disposes the princes of the world to peace." "Judgments under the leadership of Christ."—(254.)

THIRD SEAL.

"We have here just a prelude of the fulfilment of Matt. xxiv. 7, 'There shall be famines in divers places.' Bad crops and scarcity are one of the scourges in the hand of God with which he chastises unbelief and enmity to Christ and his church, through the whole course of centuries, and punishes and breaks the arrogance of an apostate and rebellious world, so as to prepare the way for Christ's dominion."—(255.)

FOURTH SEAL.

"We have here a junction and an aggravation of the two preceding plagues." "War, and indeed such a war as scatters death and destruction far and wide, appears here in connection, not merely with scarcity, but with absolute famine, and, along with that also, disease and wild beasts." "The pale horse images war, death. As the rider under the fourth seal has the name of death, the second is personified war, the third personified scarcity."—(258.)

FIFTH SEAL.

"The plagues of the four first seals have respect merely to the world ; under them the blood of martyrs is not shed." "In the fourth seal, only the fourth part was carried away ; with all its terribleness, it bears only a partial, provisional character. But here a general judgment begins to come forth on the inhabitants of the earth." "The substance, in short, of the fifth seal is, such catastrophes as bring to view the final judgment on the world, and, in connection with that, the glorification of the church."

SIXTH SEAL.

"Then the judgment which meets us under this seal does not at all bear the character of the final judgment."—(273.)

SOLUTION NOW OFFERED.

FIRST SEAL.

The mystery of godliness. Christ is on his throne. Crown, the laurel wreath given to victors. See Notes vi. 2, on rider and crown. The sealed book is the book of the Lamb's inheritance, and of the ways and means used in its repurchase. See General Remarks, IV.

SECOND SEAL.

The Dragon.

THIRD SEAL.
The Beast.

FOURTH SEAL.
The False Prophet.

The
Mystery
of
Iniquity.
See Part
II. p. 48,
and Intro. VI.

The first four seals give us the battlefield of these two great mysteries ; the fifth and and sixth, its results, personal and political. See Intro. VI.

Hengstenberg does not regard the epistles as prophetic, and at page 96 are these words, "But this very circumstance shows that the churches of Asia do not represent the whole church." Compare with this our Intro. I. and General Remarks on Chapters I., II., III.

Hengstenberg 'does not regard the sealed book as the archetype of the whole Apocalypse ; for if so,' 'we should have nothing new to begin that second book with at chapter x.'—(225.) See Intro. VI.

See Notes VI. 15-17.

We should naturally look for some condition of things in which death would prevail in a remarkable manner. There is just that kind of obscurity about it which contributes to sublimity, and gives scope to picture the form of the destroyer." Let the reader observe that destroyer is one of the names of the false prophet. And he adds, "Here ends the array of horses : and it is evidently intended by these four symbols to refer to a series of events that have a general resemblance, something that could be made to stand by themselves, and that could be grouped together." Precisely so have we grouped them ; we are consequently agreed save in the restriction of the seals to Pagan Rome.

Fifth Seal.—"This seal," says Barnes, "pertains to martyrs." "A sufficient fulfilment of the passage, so far as the words are concerned, would be found in *any* persecution."—(191.)

Sixth Seal.—"A time of revolution and commotion, to be fulfilled by the overturning of the seats of power, and by such sudden revolutions as would fill the nations with alarm." "If a new order of things should arise in the political world, the meaning of the symbol, so far as the language is concerned, would be fulfilled."—(*Barnes*.) The same agreement as to the meaning of the symbols will be found in almost any writer. Our readers may therefore rest assured that we have not warped them to suit our views. And whence this vast compass of language, but that the seals are compendious, and not limited.

8. No solution of the Apocalypse can be right which does not tend to the practical edification of every living soul. The Word of God was writ for "instruction in righteousness" of young and old, rich and poor, learned and unlearned ; but where shall we find this if we limit the seals to the Prætorian guards, Diocletian's murders, or Constantine's semi-Pagan, semi-Christian acts ? The unlearned know nothing of such events, and even the learned are slow to draw edification from them. Every solution should convey a religious, and not simply an historic lesson ; a moral application to each heart, not an exercise of the head, and should be based on Scripture, not on Gibbon. Prophecy and history, it is true, meet at every page. The former is the sketch-map of the world's destiny ; the latter, the finished, coloured, and detailed map thereof. But ignorance should be no bar to the study of prophecy ; acquaintance with the history of God's Word, and of our own hearts, should suffice. The field of prophecy is the world and the heart ; and highly instructive as is the former, due exercise on the latter is what God more especially requires. Take history wholly away, and the solution now offered would be in nothing weakened, for it stands on Scripture, and Scripture alone. This, it is true, would be enacting the part of him, who, the better to view a river, should turn its waters from their channel. Still, important as history is, we build not on history, but on Scripture :—on the double

agreement unexpectedly attained with the plagues of Egypt, and on the numerous texts given in Intro. VI. and throughout.

9. We have now reached a marked period in Revelation. In six days God made heaven and earth, and rested on the seventh. But sin had entered, and a re-Genesis became necessary. To this all Scripture points. Hence David says, "Thou renewest the face of the earth;" while God says, "I create a new heaven, and a new earth," "Behold I make all things new." In six seals, the Lord of Creation now therefore destroys heaven and earth, as a departed scroll, and the Creator again rests from his six days' work; for we read, "There was rest (or silence) in heaven." The Day of Rest is emphatically the day of sealing; and it is specially in God's Sabbatism of Rest that a great multitude, such as no man could number, shall sing salvation unto God that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb.

On the sixth day, and at the sixth hour, the Adversary triumphed over the Leader and Commander of God's people; in the sixth seal, the Lord of hosts triumphs over the Leader of the armies of Error. Seven classes of his followers are here enumerated, to show the completeness of the discomfiture, and the totality of the destruction. Six, too, is the number of the Beast—the sixth Seal is peculiarly his; and these seven classes bear his mark, or number. He shall pass away in this convulsion, with all his marked ones, and their place and name no more be found. Then, the Destroyer of Peace being overcome, "the whole earth shall be at rest, and quiet, and shall break forth into singing."—(Isa. xiv. 7, and Apo. vii. 10.)

10. In brief, then, the seven epistles prepare the universal church by a compendious and godlike exhortation for her warfare. The seven seals marshal the contending hosts, and give the issue of that warfare. The seven trumpets add fuller, the seven vials the fullest, details.

END OF PART II.

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